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September 2017 issue 381









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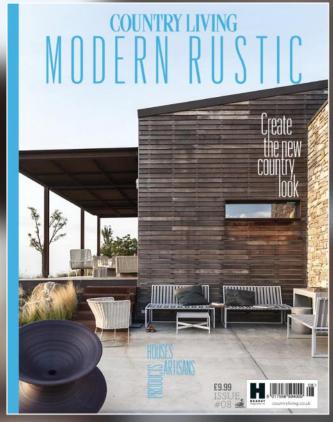
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Photograph by Sussie Bell. Styling by Selina Lake. For more details, see page 38

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in inflating prices to reduce them later on

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EMPORIUM

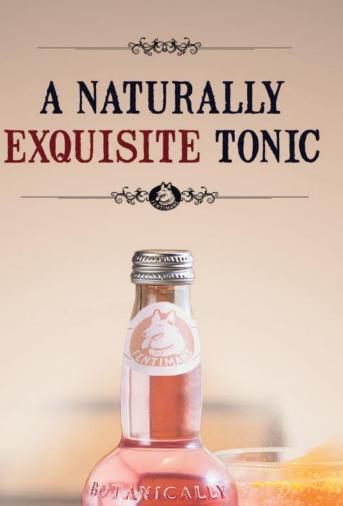


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WHAT TO SEE AND DO IN SEPTEMBER



What better way to enjoy the great outdoors than by dipping a toe, or maybe even diving, into one of the UK's lakes, lochs or lidos? Enthusiasts have been 'wild swimming' in the UK for hundreds, if not thousands, of years. Marking a changing attitude in the way people viewed the landscape, Romantic poets such as de Quincy, Wordsworth and Coleridge turned to nature for inspiration, and were known to spend time bathing in the mountain pools of the Lake District. Having been warmed by the sunshine all summer, water is at its most temperate this month, so take a dip and enjoy the views and wildlife from a fresh perspective. Visit wildswimming.co.uk for more information and a selection of places to try.



SHORTENING DAYS MARK SUMMER'S END - a time when millions of birds prepare for long-haul travel to their winter homes. In the past, unable to account for this 'disappearance', people believed that birds hibernated or retreated underground or even underwater. With the invention of satellite tracking, we now know the routes they navigate: thousands of miles across oceans and deserts. Watch out for osprey (Pandion haliaetus) fishing in lakes in Scotland, Wales and the far north of England, before they start their epic journey to Africa across the Sahara. With binoculars to hand, hunker down in a hide or head to the coast for a chance to see Scandinavian travellers such as flycatchers (*Muscicapidae*), warblers (Parulidae) and maybe even a wryneck (Fynx torquilla). Spots include Gibraltar Point in Lincolnshire, as well as The Naze and Gunners Park in Essex. To find out more, visit wildlifetrusts.org/lovewildlife.

MONTH



There are about four million pigs in the UK - a quarter of which can be spotted enjoying the last of the warm weather in outdoor paddocks. They're susceptible to sunburn, so farmers build arced shelters for protection and maintain muddy areas, or 'wallows', where pigs can bathe, covering themselves with a substitute sun cream.



QUIRKY COUNTRYSIDE

Hop Hoodening Festival

On September's second Saturday, crowds fill the streets outside Canterbury Cathedral to celebrate the Hop Hoodening Festival, which marks the start of the harvest. The Hop Queen, in her hop bower, Morris men, country dancers and two hobby horses make their way through the town to a service to bless the crop.



COURSES IN SOAP MAKING

The art of soap making Pinner, Middlesex Whether it's choosing which botanicals to use or picking ingredients for lathering, this workshop will teach you all you need to know. 30 September, from £234 (020 8429 2895; mscm.co.uk).

Cold-process soap Broadway, Worcestershire

After tea and cake, you will be given a brief history of soap making before rolling up your sleeves to mix your own batches using essential oils, flowers, spices and clays. Various dates in September, from £165 (01386 853025; little soapcompany.co.uk).

Beginners soap making Bideford, Devon All materials are included, as well as a delicious light lunch - soaps made on the day will be sent to you once finished. 29 September; from £60 (01237 420872; thesoapkitchen.co.uk).

A Month in the Country

A simple make... VINTAGE **EMBROIDERED CURTAIN**

Gather together favourite pieces of material to create your own unique window treatment

PROJECT AND STYLING BY ROS BADGER PHOTOGRAPH BY RACHEL WHITING

- Make a paper template to the measurements you'd like your curtain to be.
- Ensure the fabrics you are using are clean and pressed flat. Place the pieces onto the template, deciding which look best where and cutting to fit. Allow a 1cm overlap on each raw edge. Use the ready-hemmed sides of cloth to make the edges.
- Fill in any gaps with smaller pieces of cloth.
- Secure the fabrics together by pinning horizontally the overlapped edges to make flat seams. Pin this way so you can stitch over the hem.



- Working from the right side and using a sewing machine, attach all the pieces together using a small zigzag stitch or hand sew using an appropriate stitch.
- Press the pieces of material flat and, using a pair of

see sophieconran.com.

- embroidery scissors, trim the fabric edges close to the zigzag stitch.
- Hang in place using pincer clips to attach to a wire or across a window frame. Visit beggarsvelvet.london; @beggarsvelvetlondon (Instagram)*.





ROS WILL BE RUNNING CREATIVE SESSIONS AT THE IDLER RETREAT IN UMBRIA, ITALY HIS OCTOBER, FOR MORE INFORMATION, VISIT IDLER.CO.UK AND SEARCH 'EVENTS'



A Month in the Country

A BOOK TO READ



The Golden Age of the Garden (Elliott & Thompson, £12.99)

Many masterpieces of landscape design were devised by 18th-century pioneers such as Capability Brown. This anthology reflects on the creation of some of the nation's greatest and provides insight into what truly was a golden age of gardening.



The Village News (Simon & Schuster, £14.99)

Surviving world wars, industrialisation and expanding population numbers, the English village is a model that has endured for thousands of years. In this book, Tom Fort whimsically recalls his rural experiences, while cycling the length and breadth of the country in a bid to uncover the very essence of village life.

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STAY IN... A COASTAL COTTAGE



For a family get-together

The Tides, Winchelsea Beach, East Sussex

With its white weatherboarded exterior and floorto-ceiling windows, peaceful Pebbles Beach House provides an idyllic seaside escape on a shingle ridge, just yards from the sea. Sleeps 12. From £1,388 for two nights (mulberrycottages.com).



For seafood lovers

Monkey Beach Cottage, Mersea Island, Essex

This 300-year-old Grade-II listed house has stunning views across the North Sea. If you have a penchant for seafood, head to one of the local restaurants for oysters and crab claws. Sleeps seven. From £495 for two nights (monkeybeachcottage.co.uk).



For fantastic views

Bramblewick, Ravenscar, North Yorkshire

Up on the cliffs overlooking Robin Hood's Bay, this luxury stone cottage (top) is perfectly located if you want to explore the county. Head to nearby Scarborough or Whitby for fish and chips on the beach. Sleeps two. From £1,075 for three nights (uniquehomestays.com).



NEWS YOU CAN USE

CELEBRATE BRITISH FOOD

Whether it's beef, blackberries or butternut squash, the UK has an array of wonderful home-grown produce to offer, Since 2002, British Food Fortnight has been celebrating the very best of local food and drink. Held to coincide with the autumn harvest, the event brings together everyone from chefs and butchers to teachers and retailers - all with the goal of promoting everything that's created. Get involved by buying from a farm shop, using only seasonal ingredients for a home-cooked meal or taking part in one of the events across the country. Visit lovebritishfood.co.uk for more details.





FIND YOUR DREAM COUNTRY HOME

Our property of the month
PAVYOTTS MILL
HOUSE, EAST COKER,
YEOVIL, SOMERSET
£795,000

IMAGINE THE FEELING OF STEPPING INSIDE A HOME like

this Jacobean millhouse, dating back to the 1600s. If you like your properties lofty, verging on lordly and set amid beautiful countryside, this could be a dream come true. Once a working mill, the Grade II-listed home, built of local hamstone, is spread over three spacious storeys. Stone mullion windows, securing leaded panels, contribute to the Jacobean feel, as do stone doorways and flagstone floors. With five bedrooms, there's plenty of room for guests, and the drawing room, with windows on three sides, provides a light, bright space for entertaining. Keen cooks will enjoy the walk-in larder, and the dining room has a door opening onto the garden. Outside you'll find herbaceous borders, an extensive lawn and a selection of mature trees, adding to the sense of seclusion.

- To For details of more rural houses for sale, visit countryliving.co.uk.
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Planning your dream kitchen? Win £5,000 in our prize draw



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hether you long for sleek, modern handleless cabinets with granite worktops or prefer a more classic look with traditional stone flooring, we'd love to know which kitchen style is your idea of perfection. And when it comes to choosing where to buy, would you rather rely on the expertise of a local independent retailer or opt for the vast choice available at a well-known national brand?

Investing in a new kitchen involves a lot of thought and planning and we'd really like to know what you, our readers,

look for in terms of design, price and service. The survey will only take about ten minutes to complete online and, to thank you for taking the time to fill it in, every completed questionnaire will be entered into a prize draw to win a £5,000 voucher to spend on a new kitchen at a retailer of your choice*.

 For your chance to win, visit thissurvey.com/dreamkitchen by midnight on 22 January 2018. NEPTUNE

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How to...preserve your produce

THERE IS SOMETHING RATHER MAGICAL ABOUT PRESERVING. Whether you've grown the produce yourself or taken advantage of the seasonal glut of seasonal available at farmers' markets, preserving transforms it into something else entirely. It allows you (quite literally!) to enjoy the fruits of your labour during the colder months to come, from a crunchy pickled onion with a strong Cheddar to a sweet jam on hot, buttered crumpets.

CHUTNEYS The best thing about chutneys is the limitless opportunity for experimentation. Once you've mastered a basic recipe, you can play around with the vegetables and spices until you've created the ultimate pickle for a cheese sandwich. As a rough guide, start with 3kg veg, 1litre vinegar and 500g sugar. Courgettes, carrots, onions, cauliflowers and tomatoes are good ingredients, and most people like to bulk it out with Bramley apples, too. Spices, such as chilli or mustard seeds, give a depth of flavour, while raisins add texture and sweetness. Peel



Sterilise jars quickly and easily by running them through a hot dishwasher cycle. and chop vegetables into small chunks and bring to the boil in a large pan with the vinegar, sugar and spices. Simmer for around an hour. Once you can drag a spoon along the bottom and leave a line that remains clear for a few seconds, it's ready. Decant into sterilised jars, hot from the dishwasher, as too big a temperature difference between jar and chutney can encourage bacteria to breed. The acid in vinegar will erode metal lids, so opt for Le Parfait-style jars, which have plastic-coated lids. Leave for a month before eating, but the flavour will continue to mature if you can keep your hands off for longer!

PICKLES Pickling vegetables in vinegar creates a great taste and also preserves their crunch. The trick to successful pickled onions and cucumbers is to add the right ingredients to the vinegar beforehand. For onions this is sugar; for cucumbers try spices such as caraway and cardamom. Small pickling onions and cucumbers are the best to use, but the vinegar is a question of taste

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WORDS BY **KATE LANGRISH,** PHOTOGRAPHS BY TARA FISHER, GETTY IMAGES; "PATTERSON; STOCKFOOD, JON WHITAKER, HAND-LETTERING BY RUTHROWLAN

(white wine and cider vinegars both work well). Top, tail and peel the onions and leave them in brine for a day or so to remove excess moisture. Rinse and dry, then pack into sterilised jars. Boil up your vinegar, sugar and spices, then pour over the onions and seal in jars with plastic-coated lids. Cucumbers are even simpler - place in jars (cut lengthways, if preferred) and pour over your cooled spice-infused vinegar, then seal. Wait at least a month, or preferably three, before eating. Both types will store well for at least six months unopened.

JAMS Home-made jams are surprisingly simple to make - just boil up fruit with sugar - but a couple of pieces of key equipment can make it even easier. A heavybottomed preserving pan helps to prevent burning and a jam thermometer takes the guesswork out of when setting point has been reached (although you can check this by dropping a little jam onto a freezer-chilled plate, then seeing if it crinkles when you push a finger through). Follow a recipe (Marguerite Patten's Jams, Preserves and Chutneys Handbook is hard to beat) for jam-to-sugar ratios, as it depends on the fruit you are using. Certain types - such as strawberries - are low in pectin, which helps the jam set. Special jam sugar has extra pectin, or you can add lemon juice. Don't be tempted to use over-ripe produce, as it can cause the jam to ferment.

CUT AND DRIED



Drying intensifies the flavour of chillies, herbs and wild mushrooms. The easiest way to do it is to invest in a dehydrator (try lakeland.co.uk), which costs around £50 but saves lots of time. Chillies can also be threaded onto cotton (halve them if they're large), while bunches of herbs can be placed in a paper bag (stalks sticking out of the top), and both hung in the airing cupboard for two



STORE YOUR HARVEST

The old-fashioned techniques, used by growers for centuries, mean many fruits and vegetables can be stored for weeks and even months without spoiling. The golden rule is to always store produce that's in perfect condition - we all know what one bad apple can do to the barrel!

Store spuds in sacks Keep potatoes in hessian or paper sacks (organiccatalogue.com), as plastic doesn't allow any moisture to escape and they will end up rotting. Potatoes will go green and sprout if left in the light, so make sure they're kept in a cool, dark spot.

Keep carrots in sand Twist off the green leaves and put in a box with slightly dampened sand. Arrange them in neat rows, making sure they don't touch. Beetroot also store well this way.

Hang squash in nets Pumpkins and marrows will last longer this way in a cool spot that allows air to circulate.

Place apples on shelves Late-season apples and pears will store for months with a little care. Pick just before they are ripe and wrap each one in newspaper, then gently place on a slatted shelf in a cool spot. Bring them indoors to ripen before eating.



he way we choose to decorate our homes is an expression not only of our taste but also our personality. If you have a passion for interiors and want to create your own unique look, you'll find a world of inspiration at Style Library. This one-stop destination for distinctive decorating is the official home of six of the finest British interior design brands. Whether you're drawn to cool and contemporary or timeless and traditional, pale and interesting or dark and dramatic, there's a wealth of exciting options to explore. Curated collections of luxurious quality fabrics, wallpapers, paints and homeware all celebrate colour, pattern, texture, craftsmanship and great design. Each brand has its own character – from authentic heritage Morris & Co wallpapers and traditionally elegant Sanderson fabrics, bold statement Harlequin designs and refined Zoffany schemes to playful Scion prints and eye-catching Anthology panels. Discover your own individual look with Style Library.

ABOVE The Potting Room Collection by Sanderson Home: curtains in Allotment fennel, £30 per metre LEFT Art of the Garden Collection by Sanderson: curtains in Sultans Garden, £56 per metre; cushions (front to back): Emiko, £33 per metre; Taormina, £59 per metre

For inspiration on transforming your home, go to stylelibrary.com or visit the new flagship showroom at London's Design Centre Chelsea Harbour, First Floor, South Dome. Style Library ranges are also available through a network of quality interiors shops and designers.







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Imogen Green questions matters of the heart as she prepares to part company with Hamlet, Trotsky and Pjork

WHEN I WAS FIRST MARRIED, AN OLD HAULIER WOULD COME TO THE FARM TO COLLECT ANIMALS FOR MARKET.

He'd arrive at dawn and take charge, whistling softly. He was so amiable that cows and sheep always went willingly into his lorry. "To round up livestock, all you need is a teapot," he'd say. "If they're antsy, have a drink'til they calm down."

I wish he'd been there last Monday, because my attractive neighbour, Matthew, has been rearing pigs in a cooperative on my farm, and they had to be loaded for slaughter that morning. I couldn't help right away because I had to milk, but each time I let some cows into the yard I'd hear distant thumping and squealing, and knew it wasn't going well.

When I arrived, the villagers gathered round the sty were muddy and tearful. The pigs seemed pretty annoyed, too. I told everyone about the teapot – Matthew looked doubtful, but his daughter, Maria, understood, and led the others up to his house. He insisted on staying behind. "How can you get them in when we can't?" he said. I hesitated, reluctant to explain my philosophy. I'm never sure what Matthew thinks of me. He can be so prickly – and yet we have a real connection at times. "I always assume there's a way round a problem," I said at last. "For instance – what food can we tempt them with?"

Above us an oak tree sighed in the wind, and acorns rattled on the roof of the sty. "That won't work," Matthew said, before explaining that Hamlet, Trotsky and Pjork were now so fat and lazy that when offered windfall apples they opened their mouths and waited to be fed.

"These are pigs," I said. "I remember that my first one would do anything for a banana."

"There was an incident with a biscuit..." Matthew said thoughtfully. And so, ten minutes later, we laid a line of chocolate biscuits up the ramp of the trailer, and Matthew volunteered to lie inside, holding out a banana. Once there, he said teasingly, "Tell me about your first piglet."

"Shh," I said, delighted that he was finally flirting with me. Pjork heaved himself up from the patch of nettles where he'd been snoozing, before sniffing suspiciously at a biscuit. Pigs are competitive eaters – they can't bear to see a colleague enjoy something tasty – so it wasn't long before all three were on the ramp. After that, shutting them in took seconds.

Matthew got into his car and I leaned in the window. "My first pig was female," I said. "A good job, too, because when it was time to dispatch her, I couldn't do it so I bred from her instead. I'm amazed and sort of impressed that you can send yours away."

"Maybe my heart doesn't work the way it should," he said, before driving

off. The mood was sombre when I went to join the others back at his house, which I'd never been to before. Maria invited me into a kitchen smelling of fresh coffee, where everyone was talking wretchedly about the pigs, and how guilty they felt. All around us were photos of Matthew's late wife. She had dark curly hair like Maria, and a face brimming with intelligence and impish humour. She looked so wonderful that I completely understood why Matthew couldn't start a new relationship.

Maria's mobile rang. "Dad wants to know if we prefer large or small joints," she asked us. Emma the school teacher coughed shyly. "Could I have a butterflied shoulder?" she asked. "I've seen a marvellous recipe with thyme and celery..." I stopped listening. I'd just realised that now the pigs were gone I didn't have an excuse to meet Matthew. And that maybe some problems weren't meant to be solved.



DON'T MISS OUR NEW RURAL DATING SERIES ON BBC TWO!

Love in the Countryside, inspired by Country Living's ongoing campaign to match up country-lovers, will air in January 2018. Visit countryliving.co.uk to find out more.

Pig enthusiast seeks someone who wants to love again'













or all the elegance presented by a grand country mansion, there's often something even more beautiful about its outbuildings and servants' quarters, built for humbler purposes but with simple lines that have their own natural grace. That was certainly what attracted Justine Lacoste to her house in the countryside of Charente, in south-west France. A ceramicist, Justine and her husband Jean were living in Bordeaux, about an hour away, when they decided a few years ago to leave the city in search of a country studio with plenty of living space. They realised as soon as they first saw the old kitchen – tiled with a centuries-old terracotta floor from the local church – that they had found exactly what they were looking for.

Originally constructed to accommodate the staff of the larger 17th-century dwelling it adjoins, the building had already been renovated by a family of antiques dealers, who had restored it with meticulous detail in traditional Charente style – the exterior walls resurfaced in ancient rubble stone, rooms fitted with reclaimed doors and lintels, and chimneys fronted with the classic stone fireplaces distinctive to Saintonge (the old province of which Charente is now part). "It all felt as though it had been there for ever," remembers Justine, and for her and Jean it provided the perfect blank canvas against which they could showcase their creativity with a mix of weathered rustic furnishings, brocante finds and elegant contemporary ceramics.

The move involved a shift in both style and scale because, instead of a compact apartment, the couple now had \bigcirc



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180 square metres of country house to fill. The furniture from their flat looked lost and out of place here, so they've gradually replaced it with more sympathetic pieces gleaned from local flea markets and vintage sales.

The narrow hallway gives an immediate taste of what is to follow. Inside a glazed door that lets in the strong sunlight, a tall workbench (found in the house when they arrived) stands against one wall with shelves above it to display new porcelain produced by Epure, the ceramics workshop Justine started in 2011. Vases and bottles create their own silhouettes as well as holding grasses, seed heads and paintbrushes, and streamlined porcelain shapes provide overhead light shades, all in a subtle white-on-white palette.

In the spacious beamed living room leading off it, a couple of large sisal rugs are laid on the sun-dappled boards, and a low coffee table – cut down from a larger piece found at a market – sits between two linen-covered sofas. The natural plaster of the walls matches the colour of the stone fireplace and prevents its grand design from dominating the room; an antique painted shutter leans against the wall to one side and, on the other, a long 19th-century dining table is flanked by simple refectory-style benches. Wool curtains and cushions handmade by their neighbour Mathilde Labrouche (part of the same family who originally restored the house) add subtle textural accents in this otherwise neutral room, and intriguing contrasts are introduced by accessories such as 18th-century silver candlesticks alongside an outsize Cameroon feathered headdress.

Meanwhile, in the kitchen, the sense of quiet restraint gives way to a more practical, rustic feel. Taking a lead from the varied colours and uneven surface of the ancient floor tiles, Justine has mixed everyday ceramics with family treasures and set mismatched chairs around the painted table. Chopping boards, measuring spoons, pans and cooking ingredients cram the worktop and sink unit, which Jean built against one wall from old floorboards and salvaged zinc. Facing it, a former shop display cabinet, topped with a marble slab at one end, creates a freestanding island and extra worksurface.

Upstairs, Justine has introduced a stronger sense of colour: a wall of sky blue, specially mixed for her by a painter friend, soars up into the eaves above their bed, accented by the rich old gold of

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OPPOSITE The outbuildings are linked to the main house by a covered courtyard, which provides a year-round space to relax and entertain THIS PAGE, CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT Shelves with boxes and baskets

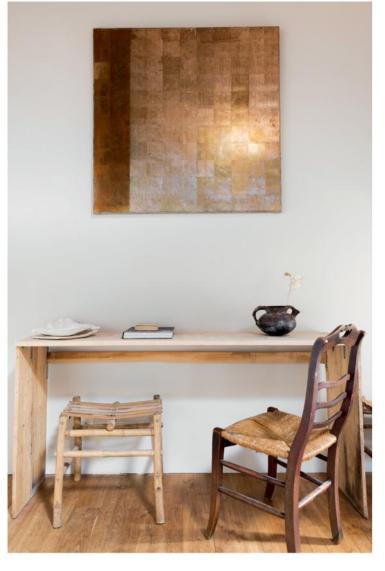
create a simple storage unit in the bathroom, where mosaic tiles echo the turquoise walls; Justine's ceramics are created in the barn studio; a panel of copper and silver leaf hangs above Jean's homemade desk

a velvet bedcover and the deeper blue of ceramics on a shelf. In the bathroom, glowing turquoise paintwork and mosaic tiles echo the colour of the sky outside. Both rooms feature a mixture of old and new wood in the form of simple furnishings - a hand-built desk and an old family chair in the bedroom and homemade shelves in the bathroom, with rustic crates and baskets slotted into them for storage. But there are dramatic flourishes, too: a panel of copper and silver leaf on the bedroom wall, made by a friend as a present for Justine, and, in the bathroom, an original church confessional box has been installed at one side to house the washbasin.

With its ancient surfaces and classic lines, it's a house that could have been tailor-made for this creative couple. Justine and Jean have turned the barn into a studio for their own work and here they design and produce their elegant ceramics beneath the high vaulted ceiling. Massive arched doors open onto the rough grass outside, and a covered cobbled courtyard with relaxed seating provides a year-round view across the garden to the fields and sky - all the inspiration they could ever want.

🕡 To find out about Jean and Justine's ceramics, see epure-ceramique.com. For more on Matilda Labrouche antiques dealer, visit antiquaire-de-materiaux.com.

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SEASONAL INSPIRATION







FLORAL FLOURISH Create a country table setting with glorious displays of dahlias, hips and haws in vintage glassware.

Opposite and this page Pine table, £169, Magpies Vintage. Painted chairs, from £55 each, Decorative Country Living. Glass cake stand, £50, LSA International. Gingham napkins, £15.99 (for four), Walton & Co. Tiverton Blue dinner plates by Churchill, £8 each; side plates, £6 each; salad **bowl**, £12: all Tablewhere. Moroccan Beldi

glasses, £24 (for six), Raj Tent Club. Ball glass jars (as vases), from a selection, Fresh Preserving Above Vintage table, £180; vintage floral fabric, £40: both Sunbury Antiques. Bar icelip glass jug, £38, LSA International. Hand-blown two-cup glass teapot, £42, Jing. Victorian Calico teacups and saucers by Churchill, £12 (set), Tablewhere. White ceramic jug, £30, Not On The High Street. Storage jar, £8; floral embossed glass jug: both Longacres. All other details, as before



POTTED PLEASURES

Enjoy the flavours of summer all year round by using sun-ripened fruit and hedgerow pickings to make mouthwatering jams.

Left Vintage enamel colander, £20, Sunbury Antiques. Red check fabric (as tablecloth)and floral fabric (as jar cover), from a selection, Fabric Land

HARVEST CELEBRATION

An array of seasonal bounty laid out on rustic trestles makes a colourful display.

Opposite Dog-rose lithographic print wallhanging (supplied with wooden rods and nylon cord), £65, Wallography. Pine folding table,

£169, Magpies Vintage. Red check fabric and vintage colander, both as before. Tall glass vase, £18, Longacres. Jams, from a selection, Bonne Maman and local farmers' markets. Large antique glass bottle (used as vase), £90, Petersham Nurseries. Tiverton Blue side plate by Churchill, £6, Tablewhere. Empty jam jars (used as vases), from a selection, Fresh Preserving. Galvanized metal bucket (used as a vase), from a selection, ebay. Vintage hurricane lantern, £35; wooden bench, from a selection: both Home Barn. Rustic wooden apple **trug**, £25, Etsy. Plaid wool blankets, from a selection, The Tartan Blanket Co









HOMEMADE SLOE GIN

Freeze wild sloes overnight to split the skins, then half-fill a sterilised jar with them and top up with good gin. Add two tbsp of caster sugar, secure the lid and shake well. Store in a dark place for two months, lightly shaking the jar every other day.



DAHLIA DISPLAY

Complemented by berries, crab apple sprays and rosehips, dahlias are the bright and beautiful stars of this seasonal still-life. Combine garden flowers with wilder hedgerow specimens and arrange in a vase or jug, with stems cut at different lengths for a charming, relaxed effect.



BOTANICAL PLACE SETTINGS

Add a special touch to your harvest table with personal namecards. Choose a botanical print and colour copy it onto A4 white card. Cut out individual tags, using a luggage label as a template, then write the name of the guests on each one.



SEASONAL WREATH

Create a colourful display to provide eye-catching $outdoor\, decoration\, or\, brighten\, your\, home.\, Gather$ blooms, berries and foliage from the garden or on a countryside walk and cut them down to short sprigs. Soak an oasis wreath base in water and cover with the foliage and berries, followed by the flowers.





RURAL BUSINESS





ollow the road that winds its way from the tiny hamlet of Young's End towards the parish of Felsted and you'll find yourself immersed in a landscape that's remained virtually unchanged since it was mentioned in the Domesday Book. A patchwork of green fields is dotted with horses and towering trees, while well-trodden footpaths dissect the Essex landscape – the only sound the call of skylarks. Pass beneath a brick bridge and eventually you'll come to a 200-year-old farmhouse

beside an ancient oak. This is Slamseys Farm, home to the same family that has worked the land here for generations and a small piece of the rich agricultural heritage that abounds in the area.

It is here that Beth Paterson gathers the produce for her range of delicious botanical gins: "Every day there is fruit ready to harvest, I'm out there picking it." With a workload heavily dictated by the seasons, Beth's early autumn days are particularly long and demanding. Working alone – besides the resident wildlife and occasional family support – she gathers the ingredients by hand. "We always leave some for the nesting birds," she says. "The bees adore the blackthorn and the blossom is a favourite of theirs."

Once collected, the berries are washed and sorted before being added in single species to premium-quality gin, where they are left to steep for anything between six weeks and six months, depending on type and desired taste. After bottling, each one is given a label featuring an intricate sketch – inspired by the work of 17th-century naturalist John Ray, who once lived nearby – of one of the countless creatures who depend on the hedgerows in the area. Every flavour and bottle size bears its own insect: beetles for blackberry, honey bees for raspberry and, on bottles of sloe, a beautiful magpie moth with its distinctive black and

white markings. "Obviously the gin tastes great," Beth says. "But I often say that the labels are so pretty, they practically sell it for me!" $\frac{1}{2}$

Beth's parents, Bill and Anne Wheaton – the most recent in a long line of family farmers – have been working the arable land at Slamseys Farm in Great Notley since the early 1990s. A farm-based upbringing gave Beth ample experience to draw on for her business idea: "Mum made fruit gin for family and friends, and I used to go and help her pick the sloes many years before I was allowed to drink any of the finished product." Beth, her sister, Ruth, and brothers, Jack and George, were no strangers to diversification, having assisted their dad from a young age with his tree-selling and pick-your-own ventures. However, sadly, the building of a busy bypass in 1999 where the fruit fields stood spelled the end for the PYO and, soon after, the Wheaton children dispersed to university.

Following her graduation, it took a stint in property management for Beth to realise office-based jobs and working for other people were not for her, so she looked to the farm for ideas. "Growing up we'd always cooked, baked and made things from scratch," she says. "Then I remembered the sloe gin and thought, 'Brilliant – I'll do that'."

Following in her father's entrepreneurial footsteps – as are her sister and younger brother, who returned to the farm to run a craft workshop and gallery and Christmas tree scheme respectively – in 2011 Beth began to replant the soft-fruit trees and bushes destroyed by the bypass. Raspberry canes and sloes went in first and, along with wild hedgerow blackberries, these became the flavours of her inaugural collection of fruit gins, which went on sale in 2012.

A poor sloe crop one year meant Beth had to diversify and soon blackcurrant, marmalade and strawberry gins were added to the range. Much like the history behind it, the recipe development has always been a family affair. "We never wrote down the original \bigcirc



RURAL BUSINESS







"Every day there's fruit ready to harvest, I'm out there picking it"



sloe gin formula," she recalls. "So it took a lot of experimenting to get the blend of fruit, added ingredients and steeping times right."

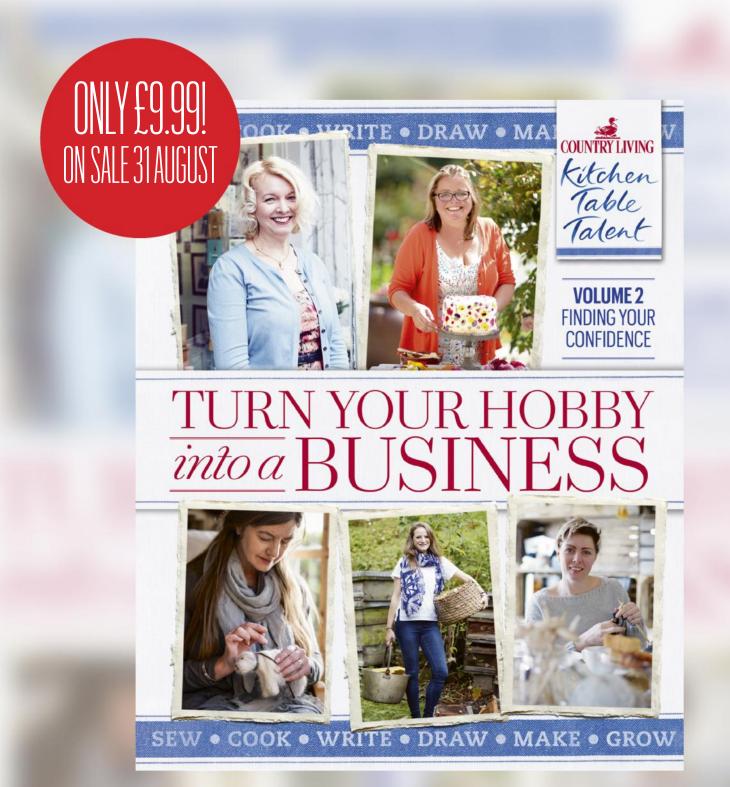
Some trials proved less successful than others – an unappetising black elderflower gin and tirelessly tweaked green walnut version were both rejected along the way. Her determination was rewarded, though, and once the recipe was perfected, she and her husband Matthew took to the road and began selling the tipples at local farmers' markets, food shows and countryside events, testing the waters to begin with by offering well-received free samples.

Since the arrival of Ewan two years ago and Finn last November, Beth has been successfully juggling running the business with parenthood. This summer Slamseys' chief picker had company on her daily gathering rounds, in the shape of Finn in a sturdy vintage pram. "It's perfect for us," Beth explains. "I can work around him napping – he's spent so much time under the apple trees snoozing while I'm harvesting fruit or trialling a new batch."

Today, in addition to raspberries, sloes and apples, the blossom and fruits of elderflowers, blackcurrants, damsons and roses also bring colour and fragrance to the farm and its surrounding barley fields. Beth currently produces nine distinctive flavours, including plum, which she may replace with damson when she has a large enough harvest, and rose, scented with the pale pink petals of the flowers grown by her mother. "This one smells just like roses when they're in full bloom," she enthuses. "We recommend drinking it straight, topped up with lemonade or drizzled over soft fruits."

Having achieved her dream career – working for herself in the fields she grew up in – Beth has no intention of changing pace any time soon. "We travel much further afield to sell now and I'd also like to do more wholesaling," she says. Recipe development carries on at the farm, too, with family tasting sessions around the kitchen table. Recent additions include an experimental Christmas tree-flavour gin. "It's probably a bit niche," Beth laughs, "but I love creating new tastes using ingredients that grow outside my back door."

for Slamseys Fruit Gins start at £18.50 for 35cl. Call 07766 584845 or visit slamseys.co.uk for more details.



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CLOCKWISE FROM ABOVE LEFT Large-scale prints work well as an expanse – on curtains and wallpaper or chair covers; frame vintage floral fragments for a unique display or appliqué them onto cushions to create

a bright flourish; Colefax and Fowler's Bowood wallpaper is a classic design that offers a decorative but quiet backdrop for pale accessories; a Chinese Tree of Life mural brings drama and detail to a bathroom



56 **s**eptember 2017







OPPOSITE Tiny and larger-scale floral designs are mixed to great effect in this pretty collage of wallpaper samples THIS PAGE, CLOCKWISE FROM ABOVE A Fifties-style pansy-print fabric lends itself to a softly frilled

edge and toning ribbon ties; reproduction chintzware jugs pick up on the patterns of antique hand-painted china; use collected vintage textiles for a patchwork quilt; showcase favourite pieces in frames











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DECORATING



CLOCKWISE, FROM ABOVE LEFT Daisy Chain by Bennison is a beautiful reproduction of a faded design; vintage or retro flower patterns look great teamed with utility fabrics, such as ticking and denim; impressionistic floral wallpaper in a soft marine hue adds detail while maintaining a calm mood in a bathroom; an eclectic mix of fabric styles, including stripes and paisleys, sets off a floral headboard







STYLING BY ALAINA BINKS, HANS BLOMQUIST, BEN KENDRICK; SOPHIE MARTELL; SARAH MOORE; HESTER PAGE; CAROLINE REEVES. PHOTOGRAPI SIMON BROWN; LISA COHEN; CHARLIE COLMER; CATHERINE GRATWICKE; JAMES MERRELL; CLAIRE RICHARDSON; MARK SOOTT



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Kitchen Table Talent

THIS MONTH: THE EAST YORKSHIRE TEXTILE ARTIST



We celebrate the home-grown entrepreneurs who have turned their hobby into a thriving business

WORDS BY SALLY COULTHARD • PHOTOGRAPHS BY ALUN CALLENDER









orinne Young stands and sketches in her garden, the midday sun gently warming her back. It's late summer, but autumn seems a million miles away – the garden is still in full swing, and feels alive with the hum of bees and butterflies. Verbenas, love-in-a-mist, sedums and, Corinne's favourite, passion flowers, fill the borders and provide the last swathe of colour before the weather, and the garden, start to fade.

"Ilove summer," Corinne says, "but I get quite cross if the sun doesn't perform. So I find these stolen, luxurious days wonderful. I always try to have a holiday at this time of year when everyone else has gone back to work. It's such a special time – for me it's all about enjoying the outdoors, picking fruit, collecting seeds and making jam."

For someone so connected to the changing seasons, it's no surprise that Corinne's natural surroundings and her work as a textile artist are inextricably entwined. Her work focuses on plants and insects and, unusually, she often works in three dimensions, creating exquisite embroidered assemblages of butterflies, flowers and seed heads.

It's an intricate process and one that gives Corinne both artistic fulfilment and an intellectual challenge. "The thing that has always appealed to me about textiles is their versatility," she explains. "There are infinite materials and ways in which you can work; it's possible to 'sculpt' in this format, something that I love to do. Working in three dimension really brings things to life."

To do this means Corinne has to know and understand the structure and complexity of what she's trying to represent. "My work is joyful in that it is about my enjoyment, and fascination for the subject matter," she says. "But it's also about how to best

OPPOSITE AND THIS PAGE
Corinne's three-dimensional
artwork, bespoke furnishings
and accessories are inspired by

historical artefacts and plants

and insects in her garden. After studying their form, she particularly enjoys recreating favourites such as cornflowers and passion flowers (above) recreate a flower or butterfly and the problem-solving behind the construction. Before I can build something, I need to fully understand its anatomy."

And the best way to do this? "You need to learn how to look." A seemingly simple skill but something that artists and craftspeople spend a lifetime perfecting. For Corinne, her education started at home, with a mother who loved to garden and knit, and an exacting but creative father who spent his working life in textiles. Her aunt, a seamstress, also showed Corinne the alchemy of fabrics: "I watched her when I was little, copying designs she'd seen and cutting straight into the fabric with no pattern – such confidence. She made the most amazing clothes, hats and bags. By the time I was nine or ten I'd absorbed the process and was making clothes for myself and my dolls."

After leaving home at 16, Corinne spent her twenties and thirties working with fabric and colour in different ways including fashion retail and interior design, as well as bringing up her two daughters, Rachel and Rebecca. But it wasn't until the girls had grown up and Corinne reached the age of 40 that she gave herself permission to become a full-time student and signed up for a BA in Textile Design at Bradford College. It was there that Corinne met tutor and textile artist Diane Bates, a formidable creative force and the woman who inspired her to forge a living from her creativity. "She taught me how to see," Corinne explains. "If we were looking at plants, for example, she made me examine their structure and anatomy with a magnifying glass, something I've become fascinated with since. On a practical level, she also taught me some really complex embroidery and textile techniques, ones that built on the skills I'd learned and practised since childhood."

More than ten years on and Corinne now makes a living from her art, creating three-dimensional artwork, bespoke furnishings and accessories, selling her work online and at exhibitions across the UK. She's also a woman at ease with decorating and embellishing her own home. Her personal touches are everywhere – patchwork walls, fabric taxidermy and richly decorated cushions create a warm, inviting home full of wit and character. Her art is also everywhere – fabric flowers, butterflies

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and textile potted plants fill every surface. It's a specimencollector's world fashioned from fabric and thread.

Her work comes in many guises but her signature pieces are framed textiles, three-dimensional plant and butterfly portraits mounted onto collaged backgrounds. For these the process begins in the garden, with a fluid sketch of a flower, seed head or passing insects. In her studio she draws and paints the design onto handmade linen paper. "I machine-embroider on top and cut out the flower from the background. At this stage, I can embellish with hand-stitching using embroidery thread or textured yarns."

The work starts to become sculptural: "I stiffen the back of the piece with a mix of wood glue and water and then, as it's drying, I shape the flower into a lifelike form, sometimes using wire to support it. Once everything is dry, I can fix it to its background using a combination of glue and stitching – each background is different, sometimes embroidered fabric or paper, others are hand painted or have an applied collage of botanical prints."

Corinne's cross-over between textiles and gardens is one that has led down some interesting paths, not least a recent collaboration for GROW London with Francesca Murrell, an award-winning garden designer. Inspired by 18th-century women textile artists, Francesca and Corinne transformed a shepherd's hut into a Stitcher's Retreat, with embroidered furniture, stitched plants and sewn props. The wheeled studio was also surrounded by wild flowers, heritage vegetables and fragrant herbs, creating a space that inspired both gardeners and textile-lovers alike.

Other fruitful collaborations have included an exhibition with installation artist Gideon Johnson at Burton Constable Hall, an Elizabethan house near her home, and 16 vast wall panels for the Lord of the Rings show in Toronto and London. But it's in her East Yorkshire cottage that Corinne's best work takes place – sketching in her glorious garden in the late summer sun, it's her relationship with the natural world that grows the richest of rewards.

7 To buy Corinne's work, visit corinneyoungtextiles.co.uk.

WHAT I'VE LEARNT



It takes a while for people to take you seriously. You need to be prepared for the long-haul – it doesn't happen overnight, so it's important to be realistic with your expectations.

There are challenges you can't always overcome. I'm not a brave driver. I've been asked to do shows in London, which I've had to turn down as I don't like to drive there. It can be tricky taking my artwork on the train, but I'd rather that than face the stress of traffic.

You mustn't give up on long-held ambitions.

Vintage

used, as

Corinne

makes in

She gets

inspiration

from Burton

Agnes Hall

(below)

much

large sheets

in her studio.

fabrics are

well as linen

paper, which

I've been a subscriber to *Country Living* since my children were babies, so when the magazine got in touch about featuring me I was thrilled. It's taken me 30-odd years but I've got there! I also did a commission for the Modern Pantry restaurant in London, and spent the summer collecting different plants and flowers from gardens in Yorkshire. It was a lovely project to be involved in.

The 9 to 5 isn't for everyone. Being an artist is more a lifestyle than a job. I enjoy the freedom of choosing my own schedule – it's wonderful to be in charge of what I do and not have it dictated to me. You can pick things up and take them in different directions and just see what works.







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In the heart of the Chilterns, the Blue Tin farm sho sells vegetables, eggs, pork and Dexter beef all carefully grown and raised by one inspiring couple

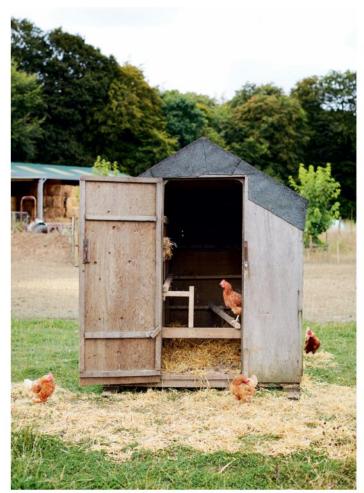
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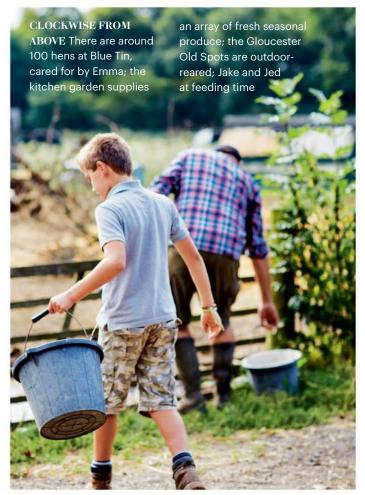
fyou've ever spent your journey to work dreaming about what it would be like to leave the 9 to 5 behind, move to the country and grow your own food, a visit to Jed and Emma Jackson's farm, outside the village of Ipsden in Oxfordshire, would show you exactly how that life could look. Reached via country lanes that cut through woodland just beginning to show the russet shades of autumn, the first sign of the shop you'll see is the family's 17th-century farmhouse hidden among the

trees. Venture up its drive past a field of Gloucester Old Spot pigs nosing the ground, ears flopping over their eyes, and you'll find geese and slender Indian Runner ducks waddling in between Emma's carefully tended vegetable beds. Tucked behind these is the neat farm shop, often with Roo, the family's springer spaniel and 'resident meeter and greeter', sprawled on the

RURAL BUSINESS









RURAL BUSINESS

deck and enjoying the September sunshine. However, mention to Emma that many would envy her bucolic way of life and she seems genuinely surprised. "Really? Do you think people would want to do this?" she says. Full of energy and broad smiles, Emma is testament to the positive effects of 'living the good life'. But having spent most of her twenties working as a TV researcher in London, if it hadn't been for a chance encounter (and a pivotal box of eggs), her life could easily have been very different. "I'd come back home to Goring for Christmas when I bumped into Jed, who'd been a friend of mine for ever," she says. "We ended up chatting in the pub. I was deliberating whether to apply for a different role or take some time out to go travelling. Jed, who was working as an agricultural contractor with his dad at the time, said he'd like to go travelling, too. So that was that. We weren't even a couple at the time – that happened during the trip."

When they returned in 2003, they moved into a mobile home on Jed's parents' tenant farm and began planning their next step. "Jed did say that he'd move to London with me, which was so sweet of him because he would have hated it," Emma says. Ultimately the decision was made by a box of eggs. They were left over when Jed's mum's hens had a particularly good laying

week, and Emma and Jed put them out in a box with a sign saying 'For Sale' on the way to the pub for Sunday lunch. "When we came back, after quite a few post-lunch drinks, and saw they'd gone, we got really excited. It was then that Jed said, 'We could open a farm shop!"

The Blue Tin Farm Shop now supplies produce to more than 15 local eateries as well as dozens of individuals who come by each day to pick up joints and rashers from free-range animals they know have been raised only feet from the shop. Emma and Jed also collaborate with other members of the thriving local business community, stocking cheeses from Nettlebed Creamery and bread from BB's bakery. Green and Gorgeous (featured in CL June 2017) provided potatoes before they went 'fully floral': "Rachel and Ashley are actually meant to be vegetarians, but sometimes in the depths of winter Ashley will dash into the shop and say, 'It's too cold; I just need some sausages!"

It was these sausages that actually marked the next step in the Blue Tin journey. Having decided to stay in Oxfordshire, Jed and Emma bought ten Gloucester Old Spot pigs (Jed's favourite animals) and rented a field to keep them in. "It was a lovely spot on the other side of the woods," Emma says. "It

People pick up local produce and meat from animals raised only feet from the shop





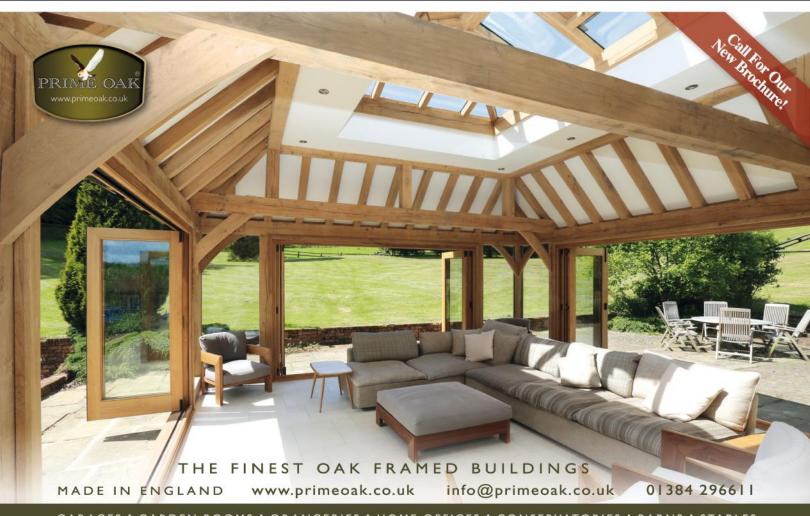
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RURAL BUSINESS







Emma picks green beans for the shop in the kitchen garden. As well as their own produce, the couple sell a good selection of food, from chutneys to cake, mostly sourced from within five miles of the farm, along with homeware and books. Jake has also been industrious, setting up his own manure business



sloped to the west, so we would sit out there and watch the sun go down. We even camped out there." When the time came to dispatch the pigs, they simply asked friends if anyone would like the meat and were surprised when all of it was pre-ordered before they even visited the abattoir. "It was a good thing, too, because we hadn't really thought about where we'd store it all," Emma says.

Following this success they bought some breeding sows, a boar and ten Dexter cows, a small-statured breed famed for its dark, flavoursome meat, which Jed develops further by hanging it for 28 days before selling. Around this time the beautiful, if slightly dilapidated, cottage on the edge of Jed's parents' farm also came up for rent and the couple jumped at the chance to take it, moving in just after the arrival of their first son Jake in 2006, who was followed by Johnny two years later. It also meant that they could finally build a shop to sell their produce from. "We opened it in December 2009, when the boys were three and ten months. In hindsight we could maybe have waited a year – trying to hold onto a three-year-old while you water three dozen pigs can be tricky," Emma says, laughing.

As their stock grew, so did the demand along with their level of experience. "Jed has worked on farms all his life and is brilliant at rearing the animals, but I didn't really know what I was doing. It's been a steep learning curve. I think we were just lucky to start at a time when people were becoming more aware of the provenance of their meat," Emma continues. "Even if the label on a pack of sausages in the supermarket makes them appear high-welfare,

you can look on the back and see that they've actually been made on an industrial estate in a city – I think people are getting tired of having the wool pulled over their eyes."

Blue Tin customers enjoy the fact that they can see for themselves what a lovely life the animals here have, although Emma admits she's relieved that Jed is in charge of looking after them: "He takes them to the abattoir, which is good because I think I'd struggle."

The shop has now been open and steadily growing for eight years. Its name is a reference both to its blue-grey corrugated-iron roof and the house the couple saw outside Darwin during their travels, which inspired the style: "It was the most beautifully unusual place – we hoped then that one day we'd build something like that and now we have." In keeping with the Jacksons' perpetual energy, there are always new plans afoot for the shop, the most long-standing of which is to build another building (with a blue tin roof naturally) where walkers, cyclists enjoying the National Cycle Route that passes the farm, and other lovers of the countryside can come for sustenance and enjoy the spectacular views over the Chilterns.

"We could have called ourselves something more obvious like Ipsden Pigs," Emma says, rubbing a sow behind the ears. "The name Blue Tin is quite unusual, but then again so are we."

To find out more about the shop and sign up to the newsletter for updates, visit bluetinproduce.co.uk.

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From regenerating wild-flower meadows to working in woodlands, one of Britain's last remaining herds of Shire horses offers a natural alternative to modern machinery

WORDS BY ANNA MELVILLE-JAMES PHOTOGRAPHS BY ANDREW MONTGOMERY

















quint and it could be the 19th century – the harness jingle, warm breath cloudy at the noses of mighty Shire horses pulling logs through the mulch and morning chill of an ancient forest. Only the hum of a passing car convinces you that you haven't time-travelled. Once this would have been a common sight. In the First World War there were more than a million Shires in the UK, but now there are only 1,500 worldwide, making them rarer than the giant panda. Even things once intrinsic to the English landscape, it seems, can be left vulnerable by 'progress' if there are no champions to protect them. But watching these horses work, it seems amazing that something so vast and solid could possibly disappear from rural life so quietly.

Operation Centaur manages one of the last working herd of Shires in the UK. Today, two of its horses – Murdoch and Nobby – are demonstrating their skills, showing landowners and managers that working with heavy horses isn't a romantic ideal, but a relevant, practical way of stewarding the countryside. Local councils, the Environmental Trust and The Royal Parks are all here to be convinced once again of the continuing relevance of the 'Great Horse' upon whose shoulders England was built.

Shires date back to Henry VIII, who used Continental breeds to create a placid colossus, able to carry knights in armour. When swinging swords gave way to gunpowder and speed, their power was then harnessed in farm work and later pulling coal wagons and barges along canals, as the country moved into the industrial revolution. The Shire was also key in transporting, powering coaches, trams and drays. But from the 1920s on, the buzz of tractors, lorries and cars replaced the metronome of hooves. Today, the last working horses at breweries such as Wadworth and Samuel Smith are largely nostalgic.

Operation Centaur's dream is to provide sustainable work and a future for these giants in modern society. It's not an outlandish vision – the heavy horse remains a part of land management in Scandinavia and 250,000 US farms still use equine power. So why not here? The project was established by Flemish horseman and psychologist Andreas Liefooghe, along with head coachman at Surrey's Hampton Court, Edward MacDowell, with the goal of promoting their viability. Ten years on and the team has been joined by grooms Tom and Andy – who are working the horses today – and a band of dedicated volunteers.

For the group the key lies in land stewardship, protecting and enhancing biodiversity and natural heritage. Its eight working horses can play a unique role, especially in conservation management, working otherwise inaccessible places such as woodland slopes and providing solutions to conservation challenges, including bracken control in sensitive acid grassland habitats. And they do it with low everything – noise disturbance,

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Working with a horse is a job of trust and devotion, a meditation on the earth

soil compaction, impact on flora and carbon footprint. Literally and metaphorically, they tread lightly on the earth.

On this autumn morning, in the dappled light under the woodland canopy, all eyes are on the horses. Tom takes over the reins of Murdoch to haul logs up an incline using a harness and logging arch. The horse's pace quickens, ears pricked to Tom's voice as he guides him in his work. It is a job of trust and devotion; a meditation on the earth accompanied by soft, thudding steps. Working with a horse involves building a relationship; the word 'colleague' comes up time and again. Mid-work, though, this colleague reaches up to nibble a tree, or stops, head lifted to nose the wind, a snapshot of knight-bearing nobility.

The organisation is funded purely by the work it does; from grassland management in the Royal Parks and Historic Royal Palaces to ad-hoc bracken rolling, harrowing, woodland and reed-bed management projects. It also works with the Thames Landscape Strategy and the Father Thames Trust, preparing the riverside for the annual Great River Race, and partners with

a number of charities to help with a range of conservation projects. "In a tractor you can't hear a deer rustling or a bird singing, whereas the horses are part of it all," Andreas says. Working in woodlands, the horses can step round saplings and fallen logs, or avoid ancient anthills during bracken rolling. At Ham House in Surrey, Operation Centaur cuts the cow parsley every year, but will postpone if the froth is still particularly enchanting. Nature, after all, doesn't always fit a contractor's schedule. Heavy-horse work also engages community interest and interaction. The equine versus tractor prize fight is a knock-out for the Shires – no one has ever created a meaningful relationship with a tractor.

At the end of the afternoon, Nobby and Murdoch stand, eyes closed in a power snooze, as Tom and Edward take questions. "People don't realise what these horses can do," Edward says. "One man and one horse can move ten tonnes of timber a day." "You have to get over the mindset they're old-fashioned," Tom adds. "We can adapt to any job and run pilot projects to see how

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TRADITION

Tom Nixon washes Massev's feather the traditional way: with then drying with woodflour

soap flakes before rinsing.

it might work." "How long does it take to learn to work with a horse?" someone else asks. "A lifetime," he replies.

You can pick up a lot in a couple of years, though, which is why Operation Centaur is looking for apprentices to ensure these heritage skills aren't lost. For a taster, it runs heritage-skills days at its stables at Hampton Court. Today only big grey Heath is stabled; in one field, Royal and Aragon stand together in perfect symmetry. In another, Nobby, Nicodemus and Murdoch crop the grass as buttery sun warms their huge rumps. Up at the palace it's Massy and (equine) Tom's turn to pull the tourist tram. The horses all do a bit of everything, although some are better at certain jobs due to temperament and build. And, unlike show Shires, fattened up like glossy conkers, Operation Centaur's athletes are all worked until the muscle comes.

These are second-generation; the first horses here, British Shires Jim and Harry, were brought over, ironically, from Cologne ("We sang *The Great Escape* theme all the way back"). "Jim was probably my favourite, even now. We had a special relationship." Andreas stops, for a second. "There is something magical about an older horse; it's as if they've crossed a line and they're not just horses any more. This is why we're called Operation Centaur, because they bridge that gap." As such, he also uses the Shires in his therapy work, including antibullying programmes that put horses in the arena with teens so they can learn team-building.

Andreas is pragmatic but ambitious: "Heavy horses can't compete in large-scale agriculture today, but here, in these pockets of land, and in similar pockets around the country it makes sense to use horses - from viticulture and wild-flower meadows to woods and butterfly highways. We'd like to encourage more people to do this kind of work locally - to go and find these spaces around their area and see the potential."

For all the ghost horses silently ploughing fields of memory, there are flesh-and-blood ones today, ready to lean in to the harness. They belong in the landscape. With a creative look at our environment we can let them pull their weight once more.

The Last Herd by Paul Stewart, a book of photographs following the Operation Centaur Shires, is available from photographyintoart.co.uk (£34.99). For more details on apprenticeships or volunteering, visit operationcentaur.com.











Join us down on the farm!

ome and enjoy a day of fun, food and farming as one of our guests at this exclusive *Country Living* visit to the Yeo Valley farm on 27 September 2017. This year, the farm hosts the annual Mendip Ploughing Match – a hotly contested event that brings talented country people from over Somerset to compete against one another. Watch them as they work, using vintage tractors, Shire horses and hand-held ploughs.

We start the day with a hearty brunch in the farmers' marquee while listening to local history expert Les Davies talk about farming life. Then there is time to watch the event and see demonstrations of rural crafts such as dry-stone walling and hedge-laying, plus the opportunity to decide on your particular favourites in the produce competitions. And, of course, there will be plenty of time to meet the farmers and sample a drop of scrumpy.

You'll then be taken back to Yeo Valley Canteen, with its award-winning team of chefs who are preparing a special harvest lunch using delicious local produce. Meet members of the CL team and the folk from Yeo Valley, and be entertained with anecdotes about the highs and lows of farming and of finding love in the countryside from CL columnist

Imogen Green. All guests will receive an exclusive goody bag with gifts from CL and Yeo Valley.

This promises to be a fantastic day out in beautiful British countryside. We would love you to join us. Book your tickets now!

EXCLUSIVE READER EVENT

10am Guests arrive and are driven down to the ploughing field

10.30am Brunch is served in the farmers' tent

11am Local history expert and farmer Les Davies describes the rich West Country tradition of living off the land and explains the intricacies of ploughing the perfect furrow

11.30am-1.30pm Enjoy the ploughing, produce competitions and cider drinking

2pm Return to Yeo Valley HQ and the Yeo Valley Canteen for pre-lunch drinks with Susy Smith, Country Living's editor-in-chief

3pm Harvest lunch is served – followed by a first-hand account of the complexities of life and love on the farm from a Yeo Valley farmer and his wife as well as exclusive insights from Country Living's columnist Imogen Green

5pm Guests depart

Buy your tickets at yeovalley.co.uk

Tickets are limited, so book early to ensure your place — see you there!

countryliving.co.uk SEPTEMBER 2017 € 85



Venture out to explore Britain's landscapes after dark and you'll discover another side to the most familiar of scenes

WORDS BY **JINI REDDY**

full moon, shining in a clear night sky. How often have you craned your neck for a glimpse when this celestial body is at its peak? The moon is compelling and magical. Since ancient times it has been the stuff of myth, the setting of tales and the inspiration for worship. Man has even stood upon it. Yet rarely do even the most ardent of nature lovers set out on a walk at nightfall with the light of the moon as a guide. More's the pity. For nature is different at night – we are different.

In the witching hours our perspective on the world changes. A familiar landscape becomes terra incognita, full of shadows, textures and unfamiliar sounds and smells. At night, we experience both a velvety tranquillity and an unsettling strangeness that can crystallise into fear at the faintest noise. Wildlife behaves differently, too. Daytime creatures turn in; mysterious nocturnal ones start their shift. And you get the best beauty spots all to yourself.

The night is a realm ripe for exploration; a journey into the unknown. And there is no better way to experience its poetry than on a moonlit hike. About 16km west of Southwold and Walberswick in Suffolk, on the edge of the village of Westhall, Ivy Grange Farm is a pretty, eco-friendly glamping retreat. Kim and Nick Hoare, who own and run it, lead full-moon walks from here every month of the year.

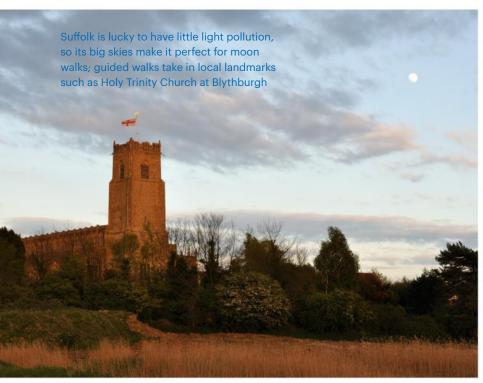
"When we moved up from London, we were struck by the night skies here: inky black with great views of the Milky Way and amazing shadows by the light of the full moon," Kim says. "The idea emerged and, for the first three years, my brother Dixe led the walks for people staying in our yurts."

She is referring to Dixe Wills, author of *At Night: A Journey Round Britain from Dusk till Dawn*, a natural ambassador for nocturnal adventures. The full-moon hikes proved so enjoyable that the couple decided to make them a regular attraction: "We invited local people to join us and started to lead them ourselves."

All hikes start within a 16km radius of the farm – gentle meanders rather than puff-inducing marches, they last from two to three hours and are free to anyone who wants to join, whether you're a guest or just happen to be in that neck of the woods. Depending on the time of the year – and the hosts' mood – you could find yourself on a river, coastal, estuary, forest or heath walk. You might be tramping over fields or covering stretches of a long-distance route, such as the Angles Way. Sometimes the hike kicks off with a pub visit. Whatever the route, you hope the moon will brighten the night sky.

Suffolk is one of the driest parts of the British Isles. And, thanks to the flat landscape, these big skies – beloved of artists such as Constable – make the county perfect for moon gazing. At our starting point, a car park in the market town of Halesworth, the streetlights detract from the moon's lustre, and I have an urge to knock them out. Perhaps it's the lunar effect. After all, the moon's gravitational pull is at its strongest when it is full, influencing tides, plants and, some believe, our moods. Our group appears out of the night in ones and twos; a couple who recently moved up from London eager to explore the local countryside and a farm estate worker who says he adores these moonlit hikes: "It's a chance to see an area I know very, very well in a different light." An amateur dowser and a farming couple also join us.

The hike is a sociable one. The downside of chit-chat is that you're less likely to hear nocturnal rustlings – but these locals are







tuned into nature. They take part in owl projects – Suffolk, Kim tells me, is the best county for barn owl sightings – tend community orchards and go on bird walks. They know the hares, pheasants, badgers and muntjac deer that roam their fields.

Tonight's hike is an 8km loop. We set off into Halesworth's Millennium Green, 49 acres of meadows, old quarries and an orchard. The River Blyth and the Town River run through the Green, as does the New Reach canal. Water voles and otters can be seen on its waterways in daylight, cattle graze beside the bank and in May you can hear the liquid song of nightingales among the trees.

And tonight? So far, no visible wildlife, though there is a stirring. We pass under a railway tunnel, a mysterious hollow through which the moon, big, bald and pearlescent white, is framed. The street lamps are now far behind.

In the field, it's muddy underfoot. Leaves squelch. A cool breeze ripples across my face. We walk hesitantly, eyes alternately skyward and checking the ground ahead. Kim tells me how, in early summer, nightjars can be heard churring or glimpsed on heathland walks. We pass through a gate and into another field. Is it a meadow? Grazing pasture? Hard to say. Our path follows a tree line. Is that an oak up ahead? Against the night sky, there's a silhouette of frilly leaves. Yes, it's an oak. Trees at night are watchful, shadowy presences. They brush up against you and trip you up if you're not careful. Their branches are shape-shifters: one moment you see gnarled hands, the next a spider's web or a canopy of veins and arteries. I jump as a pheasant, spooked, bursts into flight, its staccato squawk and flapping wings magnified in the blackness.

We cross a footbridge and edge along a river. Its waters are barely audible but the moon's reflection undulates in it. At a ridge over an old quarry someone has heard a tawny owl: a male with his haunting 'hoohoo, hoohoo'. We stand still, waiting and listening in the night. The silence is as thick as molasses. Is the owl listening, too? I have an uncanny feeling he is.

We leave the Green behind and cross a road. Our head torches, briefly switched on for safety, make us blink: it hasn't taken us

long to acquire night vision. Back on a footpath, we pass by a church and a war memorial. "We're walking through what were airfields during World War II," Nick says. All the while, the moon, so extraordinarily bright, keeps apace, flitting through trees and over the fields. As we walk, the night wraps herself around us and conversation peters out. I am more sure-footed, feeling my way through the landscape. My senses have heightened. We're all whispering now, hushed by the darkness.

In the final stretch, we walk through a loke – a narrow lane bordered by spindle trees. On either side the branches bow towards each other and create the illusion of a swirling hollow, with the moon playing peek-a-boo. On this gentlest of walks, it is a thunderbolt moment.

Walking under the cape of darkness yields another surprise: our small group of strangers, drawn like a magnet by the moon, has been touchingly solicitous of each other, more I dare say than we would have been in daylight. The night has bound us together.

**DAdapted from Wild Times: Extraordinary Experiences Connecting with Nature in Britain by Jini Reddy (Bradt Travel Guides, £14.99). To claim a 25 per cent discount, visit bradtguides.com and enter the code COUNTRYLIVING25 at the checkout. Offer valid until 31 October 2017.

TRAVEL FACT FILE

Ivy Grange Farm (07802 456087; ivygrangefarm.co.uk) runs monthly full-moon walks around the Suffolk countryside, whether the skies are clear or not. Accommodation in season is in four yurts in the three-acre meadow, from £190 for two nights. Between November and March, two rooms are available in the farmhouse for those joining the walk from £70 per night. This includes an evening meal and breakfast, as well as lifts to and from the nearest train station at Brampton.

PHOTOGRAPHS BY ALAMY; GETTY IMAGES; SALLY HARRINGTON AND NICK HOARF IVY GRANGE FARI



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Behind flint walls in Sandwich, Kent, lie 3.7 acres of stimulating gardens at The Salutation, where head gardener Steve Edney and his team like pushing the boundaries with their bold ideas. This is a good time of year to visit, when the late-season colour is in full swing. The Salutation's 8th annual Dahlia Festival - featuring 200 types - will take place on 16 and 17 September, 10am-5pm, with talks by author Val Bourne and BBC TV's Frances Tophill, tours and demonstrations. Admission £8, under-18s free (01304 619919; the-salutation.com).



A GOOD READ

Katherine Price's message in Get Plants (Kew Publishing, £25) is that they make our lives richer and she is out to prove it, especially to those who don't yet consider themselves gardeners. This is the ideal book for your student son or daughter if they lack green fingers, as Katherine takes a youthful and upbeat approach to matching plants to personality types. There are ideas for squeezing indoor and outdoor varieties onto terraces, doorsteps and windowsills, plus care tips from the author, an experienced Kew gardener.

Saraen 2007 es



MUCH CAN BE TOLD about a person's character by the way they design and tend their plot. Where order and symmetry rule, it can induce a sense of calm in owner and visitors alike - a reassuring feeling that someone is in charge and all will be well. But the flipside is that it can also be predictable and even constraining.

If you are redesigning sections of your garden, include an element of surprise. It might be a cluster of Cyclamen *hederifolium* concealed behind a tree, only to be revealed to those who venture down the furthest path. Or it could be



Everything you need to know to get the most from your plot in September

WORDS BY PAULA MCWATERS

an opening cut into a hedge, affording an unexpected glimpse of the area beyond. Playfulness has its place, too. I visited a garden in Italy where jets of water shot up into the air at random points, set off by standing on certain paving stones. Such design elements often reflect the owners' generosity of spirit, their sensitivity to the emotions a garden can evoke and a desire to share what they've made with visitors.

Seats are a key element - arrange them in your garden and you encourage friends to linger and enjoy what they see. Whether a statement bench or a simple rustic one, place it where there's something to be savoured - a scented climber, a romantic view or a quirky feature. It is these moments of quiet appreciation we remember most.

WHAT TO DO

Sow hardy annuals in gaps in borders to give an early display next year

Apply nematodes to pots to control vine weevils

Plant early spring bulbs at three times their depth

Cut down yellowing asparagus foliage and mulch beds with well-rotted manure

Lift, divide and replant early spring-flowering perennials

Plant new strawberry plants for fruiting the following year

Take cuttings of salvias and penstemons

Net ponds towards the end of the month, ready for leaf fall

Raise squashes and pumpkins onto straw as they ripen Prune climbing and rambling roses when the flowers fade 3

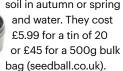
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Tip To naturalise small bulbs in grass, cut and hinge back sections of turf, randomly group the bulbs on the soil, then replace the turf

Help the bees

These Seedball tins make a lovely gift for a child or gardening friend. There are seven mixes, each containing small clay balls mixed with seeds, peat-free compost and a pinch of chilli to deter pests. The Bee Mix features species recommended by the Bumblebee Conservation Trust such as viper's bugloss, red clover and

foxglove (above). Scatter on the







The grand tour

Italy is a great place to visit in late summer and if you are toying with a tour, consult the website of Grandi Giardini Italiani (GGI or Grand Italian Gardens) - grandigiardini.it - before making plans. It gives details of more than 124 gardens open to visitors across 12 different regions from the Alps to Sicily, with pictures and videos, plus useful information including opening times and details of other gardens of interest nearby.

GIVE OLIVES A BOOST

Olive trees can run out of steam in pots, so an occasional feed will help them thrive.

Olive Focus is a concentrated formula containing mineral salts, plant acids and kelp, made by Growth Technology, which supplies nutrient feeds for Australian commercial olive growers. Suitable for garden-planted olive trees, too, it costs f_3 3.99 for 300ml and £7.99 for 1 litre (amazon.co.uk). Also available from toddsbotanics.co.uk.





This is a good month to plant clematis and make great use of vertical space. Choose a type to suit the area you wish to fill: Boulevard or compact terrace varieties such as 'Picardy', 'Corinne' and 'Kitty' grow up to 150cm high, while C. armandii and C. montana can romp for 7-9 metres to cover a boring fence. Winter C. cirrhosa 'Freckles' will give flowers from December to February. Make a hole twice the width of the pot and half as deep again, add well-rotted organic matter and plant with the root ball at least 8cm below the surrounding soil level. Keep well watered until established.

EVENT Holker Chilli Fest, 9-10 September, 10.30am-5pm, at Holker Hall, Cark-in-Cartmel, Cumbria. £6.50; under-16s free (015395 58328; holker.co.uk). PHOTOGRAPHS BY MARISCA EGIDIO (GARDEN AT CASA CUSENI, TAORMINA, SICILY); JO WHITWORTH/GAP PHOTOS, GETTY IMAGES, ILLUSTRATIONS BY MARIANNA.IO

Visit the Country Living Pavilions at Land Rover Burghley Horse Trials

JOIN COUNTRY LIVING AT THE LAND ROVER BURGHLEY HORSE TRIALS and enjoy a fun day out with fabulous shopping in our two popular Pavilions. The CL Pavilion (Avenue A) has more than 40 hand-picked exhibitors, while the Makers Marquee (by the Land Rover Arch) will be showcasing new businesses, giving you the chance to buy unique products direct from the designers and producers themselves. You'll find everything from original art, handmade jewellery and fashion through to delicious popcorn and Yorkshire gin.

Visit the CL stands for special offers on our exquisite flower range with Interflora and our dating site country-loving.co.uk, plus there's the chance to win a CL sofa from DFS! And then relax with tea and cake in our vintage tearoom, which has bird's-eye views over the cross-country course.

For full event details and tickets, visit burghley-horse.co.uk

ENTER THE CL DOG & OWNER LOOKALIKE COMPETITION



Sponsored by Harringtons, who produce natural nutritious pet food with no artificial additives in North Yorkshire, this event will be held at 12pm on Saturday 2 September outside the marquee on Avenue A. Pick up a form at the CL or Harringtons stand. There

is also a 'cutest puppy' category. First prize for both competitions is a year's worth of food, and all entrants will receive a bag of treats. For more details, visit harringtonspetfood.com.









DAY	IN ADVANCE		AT THE GATE	
	CAR	PERSON	CAR	PERSON
Thursday 31 Aug	£10	£15	£12	£18
Friday 1 Sept	£10	£15	£12	£18
Saturday 2 Sept	£10	£28	£13	£32
Sunday 3 Sept	£10	£15	£12	£18
Season entry (four days)	£30	£56	-	

Prices are per person and apply to visitors aged 13 and above. Children aged 12 and under (accompanied by an adult) are admitted free of charge. Flexi Admission Tickets, covering either Thursday, Friday or Sunday, are available for purchase up to 21 August, providing admission on any one of these days. Purchases made on site or at gate are not Flexi. Car passes are not Flexi and must be purchased for the relevant day. Visitors who book in advance will also have the chance to make a donation to the event's nominated charity, World Horse Welfare.

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RENOVATION

WORDS AND STYLING BY HESTER PAGE • PHOTOGRAPHS BY NICK CARTER



INTERIORS





he warmth of the local stone makes the rural villages of Oxfordshire seem bright and welcoming whatever the weather. Even the new-builds and conversions have this quality, and it was one of the reasons Linda Garman decided to settle in the area with her daughter Victoria. A move away from London after 40 years was long overdue and fuelled by the need for a complete change, having brought up a family and run a small antiques business. "Also I had a long-held dream of living in a farm building with its soaring space and unconventional layout, rather than the set domestic shape of a townhouse," she explains.

The plan was to find two adjacent properties that would provide privacy but also ease of access for visiting and day-to-day life. At first this seemed an impossibility. Either the houses were too big and the adjoining property too small or, more commonly, it was a large house with a bland and characterless granny flat attached. After many dashed hopes, however, they found, in a small village to the west of Oxford, two converted farm buildings with an adjoining courtyard that could be shared. Furthermore, they had the potential to provide the longed-for space for Linda's large collection of vintage furniture and accessories. The original

18th-century farm had been divided and sold in the 1980s and Linda now lives in the smaller of the two buildings – the converted stables – while her daughter and family have the larger barn next door. The old stable yard outside is a simple enclosed area with dry-stone walls and, beyond this, woods and fields surround the property.

"When I moved into the stables ten years ago, it was full of dark heavily stained woodwork and flooring, and my first thought was to lighten it up as quickly as possible," Linda recalls. So walls and woodwork were painted in pale greys and later she replaced the existing floor with old flagstones, and also added shutters to the long line of windows at the front. These flagstone floors, coupled with the interior sandstone wall, presented a good backdrop for the look she wanted to create: "The texture of the walls was always my main inspiration. I wanted to mix different elements together for both comfort and style." Using deep brown leather sofas, animal skins and roughly painted and weathered furniture ensured every detail was in harmony. The vaulted ceiling with its load-bearing beams gave the character she needed in order to fill the space with her rustic furniture and interesting objects.

The bedrooms have been given their own individual identities, too. To invigorate a plain little attic room, Linda painted the











"Ilove buying things with a past-every single piece here could tell a story"

ceiling bright blue with floating white clouds: "The idea came to me one day when I was lying in bed and I could see the sky through the skylight." This has the effect of lifting the height and exaggerating the width of the room, while the curves of the vintage French bed match the painted clouds and soften the severity of the roof pitch. In the downstairs bedroom, a soft yellow wall paint complements the colourful painted country furniture and another pretty French bed.

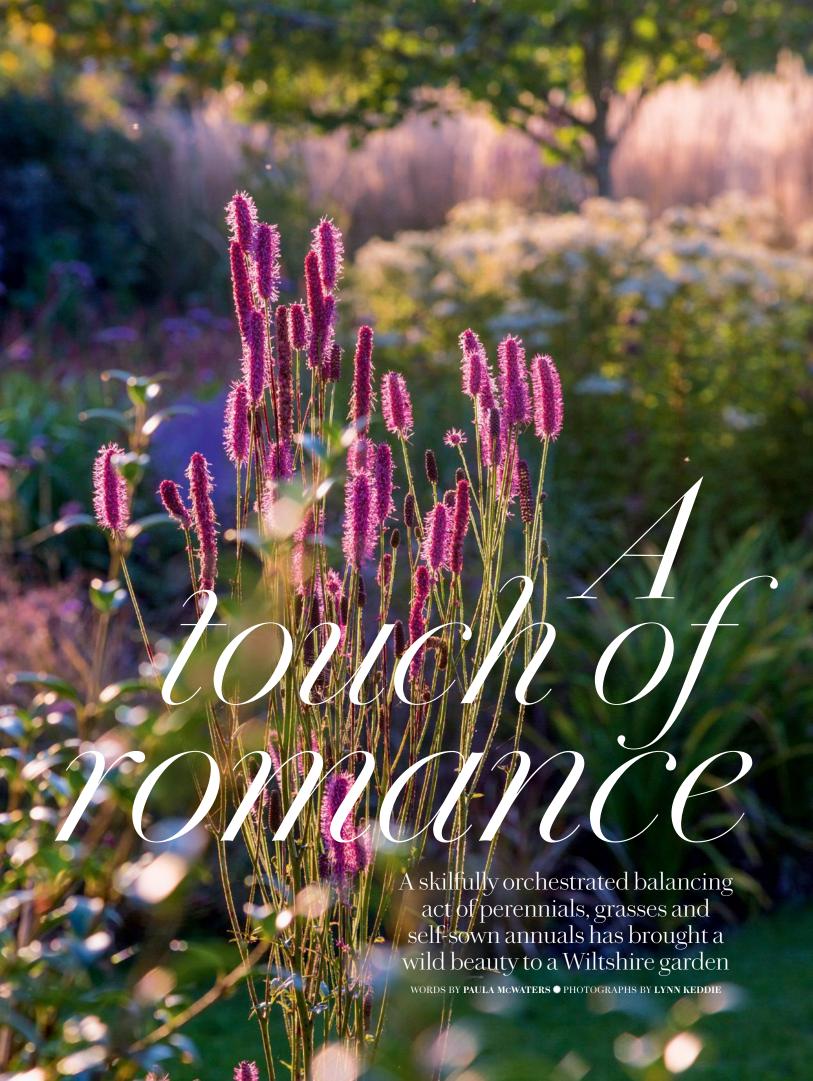
The small kitchen was already installed under the upstairs landing and opens out into the main living room. Here, the doors were removed from built-in cupboards and a collection of old oil paintings used to cover the white kitchen wall tiles. "Tm an advocate of camouflage wherever possible," Linda says. Individual touches abound – the worksurface is a piece of wide untreated elm with rough edges, for example, while the curtain that covers the lower shelves is a hand-embroidered linen sheet. Linda buys many of her pieces now from America,

where there is a strong tradition of collecting rustic period furniture. Her latest addition has been to decorate the risers on the attic staircase with vintage American wallpaper – "I love buying things with a past; every single piece here could tell a story" – and although she loves to restore, she mostly prefers to leave things untouched, letting the patina speak for itself.

The stables has been a wonderful space for Linda to work with. She also loves the wide flat landscape that surrounds it and the walks she shares with her granddaughter, when they hunt for interesting and curious seasonal items: "We each have a nature table – a still-life that reflects the beautiful countryside all around and echoes the rustic character of the property. I couldn't have found a better place."

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ames Williams is modest about his garden at Manor Farm in Wiltshire. "It only looks smart for about two days a year; the rest of the time it lacks 'finish' but that's how I like it," he says. "My aim is to give the garden some structure, crowd-control the plants a little and then basically let it do what it wants. As long as one plant isn't bullying the others too much it seems to work."

His modesty belies the skill and time he puts into this soft, hazy style of planting. There is artistry at work here – a lightly orchestrated balancing act to achieve a loose, romantic style with towering grasses and perennials of James's choosing alongside annuals that find their own way here, self-seeding themselves in the wide beds intersected by grass paths.

He and his wife Charlotte moved to the property near Warminster in 2000 after a stint working in Asia. Gardening was new to him then but he has learned fast and developed a strong sense of what he likes. The previous owner, Martin Wood, a landscape expert, had laid out the bones – arched openings in garden walls, a long 'miroir' canal and intricate interlocking hedges. James lived with these for ten years while he "learned the ropes of gardening and got to know the soil". In 2010 he was ready to make changes and called in the services of garden design professional Robin Williams.

Robin's brief was to build on the existing layout and create a more magical atmosphere. James felt this would then give him more scope and space for his own creative planting. He acknowledges Robin's good advice in not having too many different plants. "He was spot on," James says. "If you hop about too much with your choices you end up with something a bit like a fruit salad – it doesn't work. So we started with about 15 plants and repeated and repeated them." James was inspired by the wild-style planting at Le Jardin Plume, a garden created on flat, open



farmland in northern France. However, by virtue of Manor Farm's backdrop – a mellow 17th-century stone farmhouse with a series of weathered garden walls and fine views over Wiltshire's chalk downland – his own interpretation somehow manages to have a greater sense of place and tradition.

While James has some help with hedge-trimming, grass-cutting and weeding in the canal garden, he does the majority of the work himself. "It's essential to be hands on," he explains. "I need to be able to recognise the young seedlings as they emerge, then make the decision whether they stay or are moved. It is this placing of plants that is the creative driving force."

In the area outside the family kitchen, various sanguisorbas and *Persicaria amplexicaulis* 'Alba' and 'Firetail' reach a terrific height, jostling for space with grasses *Stipa gigantea* and *Calamagrostis* x acutiflora 'Karl Foerster'. *Thalictrum delavayi*, *Verbena hastata*, *Cephalaria gigantea* and the

THIS PAGE. **CLOCKWISE FROM** TOP LEFT The mellow stone farmhouse dates from the 17th century; Echinacea purpurea; tall, branching Verbena hastata provides eyecatching detail; drifts of crimson sanguisorba are complemented by a mass of Eupatorium purpureum 'Album' and vertical fountains of feather reed-grass **OPPOSITE** Helenium 'Moerheim Beauty'













THIS PAGE. **CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT** Himalayan birches flank the grass path to the fields beyond; a chestnut gate made to order by greenmanwoodcrafts. co.uk; the view across clouds of Salvia officinalis to the Wiltshire countryside; prolific-fruiting Pyrus communis 'Williams' Bon Chrétien'; vibrant Hydrangea serrata **OPPOSITE** Grasses soften the dramatic pairing of yellow Rudbeckia 'Goldsturm' with the fiery foliage of Euonymus alatus in borders by the canal

two-metre-tall, bright blue *Salvia uliginosa* are equally statuesque. "None of the plants are grand and there aren't any big, showy bloomers, but that's not the point. There's not much going on at all with some if you analyse them, but they form good strong verticals and then float and bob around – I like that." The planting has got looser and more naturalistic over time and James has gradually weeded out the tallest, most thuggish elements, such as the cardoons and much of the cephalaria, as they were threatening to take over.

Plants here must be tough to survive: "I don't really feed them and I water twice a year at most," James says. The site is a windy one, 300 feet above sea level, beside the highest hill in Wiltshire, with little in the way of shelter from trees, although the original low farm walls that now mark out various areas of the garden offer some protection, as do the undulating hedges of beech and cotoneaster that mimic the shape of the hills. "The chalk soil is thin but at least there is never any mud to wipe off your boots, even after rain," he adds.

His small cherry and apple orchards and two lines of upright, ornamental pears *Pyrus communis* 'Beech Hill' are growing fast. Other trees include six *Betula utilis* var. *jacquemontii* that James chose for their distinctive ghostly white bark, to mark the entrance

to the meadow. On arches over several gateways grow *Pyrus communis* 'Williams' Bon Chrétien' – delicious dessert pears that fruit prolifically.

James, Charlotte and their daughter Phoebe, who has grown up here, make great use of the garden for entertaining friends and family. A paved sunken area, devised by Robin Williams, is perfect for barbecues, and there is plenty of space for big parties and homecooked food with produce from the vegetable garden. This is presided over by Charlotte: "I plant it up in one fell swoop at the end of May with an array of small plug plants supplied by a local organic vegetable-grower friend," she explains. "I used to try to grow from seed but they struggled to get going because spring warmth arrives late here." Just like James, Charlotte has learned to understand the idiosyncrasies of this rather special site and go with the flow.

**D B&B accommodation is available at Monkton Barn (sleeps two) in the grounds of Manor Farm. For details, email charbevan@hotmail.com.

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PLANTS FORFICE Sovering & growing Discover the delights of saving seed from your

WORDS BY PAULA MCWATERS

garden to sow for a brilliant display next year









y saving your own seed, not only are you getting something for nothing, but you can be sure that it is as fresh as possible and you know where it's come from and how it's been treated. Although gathering seed is a traditional part of gardening, perhaps we have lost sight of its charms over the years. This is a pity because, by collecting from plants already growing happily in your own plot, you know you can offer seedlings a head start with conditions they are likely to flourish in.

PICK YOUR MOMEN'T

The time to harvest is when the seed heads have turned brown and the seeds have gone hard. You need them to be as ripe as possible but, equally, to catch them before they burst, so check often. Choose a fine, dry day and, using sharp scissors or secateurs, snip off the seed heads, placing them in a paper bag or envelope to avoid any fungal problems that might arise with a plastic bag or container. Carry a marker pen and scribble the name of the plant onto the bag as you gather, as it's easier than you might think to get seed stocks mixed up. If you don't have enough time to sort out your seeds straightaway, leave the bags in a cool, airy place until you can sift through them.









A WELL-KEPT HOARD

Some seeds – for example, teasels (above left) and hollyhocks (above centre) – need a little help to separate them from their stems and pods. Empty the bags of harvested material out onto a sheet of clean, dry newspaper and gently tease apart the chaff with your fingers, until the seed is clean. Once you have done this with all your harvested seeds and they are ready to store, batch them up into envelopes – small brown paper ones are ideal as they are cheap and readily available. Label them all carefully and store in an airtight container in a cool, frost-free place – the back of the fridge is perfect – until you are ready to sow.









SIX EASY GROWERS FROM SEED

Sprinkle some of the seeds from these plants now to grow where they fall in the garden and save some to sow in spring, either direct into the ground or in pots and modules







A FAIR EXCHANGE

You'll almost always end up with more seed than you can possibly use yourself, so you can have the pleasure of sharing the bounty of your garden with friends or take part in one of the many seed-exchange schemes that operate around the country. Each February, at Brighton's Seedy Sunday (seedysunday.org) - the UK's largest and longest-running community seed-swap event - more than 10,000 packets of seeds exchange hands. The Hardy Plant Society (hardy-plant.org.uk), The Cottage Garden Society (the cottage garden society.org.uk) and Garden Organic (gardenorganic.org.uk) all run exchange/ distribution schemes for their members, where seeds of uncommon plants are particularly welcome.







Once you know which plants you want to harvest from, you can get picky. Certain colour strains or particularly strong plants are worth marking before the flowers go over, so tie a piece of colourful wool around the stem to mark it so that you can be sure to collect seed from that one and keep it separate from your other stocks. Not all seed will turn out the same as its parents - that's part of the fun - and F1 hybrids definitely won't come true from seed, but a whole range of cottagegarden favourites, especially annuals and biennials, will grow reliably from your home-harvested stocks.



TAKE CUTTINGS

Semi-ripe cuttings are another good way to create 'free' plants for yourself and friends or to sell at fundraising plant fairs. Fuchsias, salvias, pelargoniums and penstemons can all be propagated like this now. Select non-flowering shoots, as these will root more quickly - they need to be firm at the base and still soft at the top - and drop them into a plastic bag while gathering. To pot up, trim them to about 10cm long, cutting the base below a leaf node and removing the side leaves and soft growing tip. Push them around the sides of a pot filled with freedraining potting compost mixed with alpine grit or Perlite and place in a warm, light spot out of direct sunlight. Keep the pot covered with a plastic bag until the cuttings root.









GROW&COOK recipes from the kitchen garden

This month: River Cottage

WORDS BY **RUTH CHANDLER** • PHOTOGRAPHS BY **BRENT DARBY**FOOD AND DRINK EDITOR **ALISON WALKER**

oor, thin soil barely concealing its flinty foundation and a grassed-over abandoned walled garden – a former failing dairy farm on the Devon-Dorset border wasn't the most promising site for Hugh Fearnley-Whittingstall's smallholding, but all the more reason to admire the green fingers of the River Cottage team, who not only achieved organic certification from the Soil Association in just a year, but now produce 200 varieties of vegetables, herbs and fruit there.

FLAVOURS TO FEAST ON

"September is an incredible month here: there's so much to pick, from borlotti beans and chard to apples and pears, not to mention chillis, peppers and aubergines in the polytunnel," says chef Gill Meller, as he lifts several brightly coloured squash out of a crate and arranges them on a trestle table. He was instrumental in helping to plan the quarter-of-an-acre kitchen garden in 2006, which is based on a classic four-year crop-rotation system (where brassicas, legumes, onions and roots, and potatoes switch beds on an annual basis). With a mulberry tree as the focal point and areas also dedicated to herbs, asparagus and perennial fruit, it forms an appealing allotment-like patchwork in front of the farmhouse, while more vegetables and fruit are raised in a market garden of the same size next to the pigs. In fact, Gill and the plot have grown together: as the land has become more fertile and high-yielding \circlearrowleft





(aided with homemade compost and muck from livestock), he has placed greater value on its harvest – his dishes are now centred on vegetables, with less emphasis on fish and meat. "Nothing can beat big sun-ripened tomatoes, heavy, sweet and full," he says, admiring a freshly picked selection, from green and yellow to dark red and purplish-black. An advocate of simple, seasonal food, Gill's treatment is minimal: "Serving them thickly sliced with only a scattering of flaky salt and a drizzle of olive oil is often enough, accompanied by some good bread and red wine."

TRADITIONAL VALUES

Tomatoes are guaranteed to provoke much excitement when they're delivered to the kitchens at River Cottage HQ. But while the chefs discuss how they'll present them to the students and diners who come here, head gardener Will Livingstone is intent on dissecting the ones in front of him with a penknife. "Saving seeds is one of my passions," he explains, leaning over the polytunnel staging, scraping each one out of the surrounding flesh. "I've been growing and keeping the 'Orange Banana' variety for years," he says. "It's a heavy-cropping plum kind, with each vine yielding as much as 8kg of fruit." These days, Will's act of preservation is rarely seen even among keen vegetable growers. "A hundred years ago, all gardeners were doing this and sharing seeds with their neighbours," he adds. It's among what Gill describes as the "many charming aspects of River Cottage", which also include the chefs walking around the garden with Will to discover what is ready to pick, and planning menus just three or four days in advance: "It's a rewarding way to cook, keeping things fresh and helping us develop combinations of ingredients we've not tried before."

A HUB FOR GROWERS

With 18,000 people visiting each year for courses, dining events and tours, Will's remit is to create a garden "for education, beauty and production". River Cottage raises 40 per cent of the fruit,

vegetables, herbs, meat and eggs required, but the company has never aimed for self-sufficiency: central to its philosophy is working with other businesses. This involves not only supplementing the harvest, but sharing gardening knowledge and coordinating on crops so they don't all end up with too much of a good thing. Happily, the Devon-Dorset border has attracted a wealth of organic producers, including Ashley Wheeler and Kate Norman's market garden at neighbouring Trill Farm, and Haye Farm run by Emily Perry and Harry Boglione. Will extols the virtues of the location, which help to explain the area's growing community and why River Cottage settled on Park Farm despite its rocky subsoil: "Warm air blows in from the sea and the kitchen garden is sheltered by hedges and banks."

AUTUMN'S ABUNDANCE

Harvest is now in full swing, presenting gluts to both reward and challenge. In recent years, Gill has turned his attention away from the River Cottage kitchen (which is headed up by Gelf Alderson) and towards teaching its students, so the garden's crops form the inspiration for his classes at this time of year. He takes great pleasure in sharing his love of organically grown produce and teaching how to pickle, ferment and cure the season's riches for enjoyment all year round. Preserving aside, does Gill have any tips for those keen to make the most of what they've gathered from their own garden or allotment? "By trying to stick to just three or four main ingredients, balancing them in terms of flavour and texture – soft versus crunchy, salty versus sharp and clean – you can come up with a special dish. Cooking with fresh produce is quick and uncomplicated – if you give it plenty of thought." *Turn the page for a selection of delicious recipes using seasonal produce*. \bigcirc

**D River Cottage HQ, Trinity Hill Road, Axminster, Devon (rivercottage.net). Recipes adapted from River Cottage Veg Every Day! (Bloomsbury Publishing, £25). Recipes by Hugh Fearnley-Whittingstall.

FOOD & DRINK









RIVER COTTAGE'S TOP GROWING TIPS

Grow turmeric tubers
(available from health
food shops) in a
polytunnel or greenhouse
ideally (or a sunny and
very sheltered spot in your
garden). Place in freedraining compost in
April or May.

Plants such as borage and phacelia will attract pollinators, including bees, while a patch of nettles simply left to develop can provide a habitat for insects that will predate pests, negating the need for chemical solutions.

Save the seeds of those varieties you would like to grow again.

Download a guide at realseeds.co.uk/
seedsavinginfo.html.







OPPOSITE AND THIS
PAGE The burgeoning
kitchen garden at River
Cottage HQ is the stuff
of most chefs' dreams.
Gill and Will work together
to produce a wide array of
meat, fruit, vegetables and
herbs that will complement
each other in a host of
interesting dishes through
the seasons. Will saves the
seeds to grow on





MEXICAN TOMATO AND BEAN SOUP

Preparation 20 minutes Cooking about 15 minutes Serves 4-6

This fresh, piquant soup combines many of the ingredients you might find in a feisty salsa, but here they're 'souped up'. Add more chillies if you like it hot - a handful of fresh sweetcorn kernels, sliced straight from the cob, is a good extra.

2 tbsp olive oil 2 red onions, finely chopped 3 garlic cloves, finely chopped 1-2 medium-hot green chillies, such as jalapeño, deseeded and finely chopped ½ tsp ground cumin 600ml vegetable stock 200ml roasted tomato sauce

(see opposite) or passata 400g ripe tomatoes, cored, deseeded and finely chopped 400g tin black beans or black-eyed beans, drained and rinsed a handful of oregano, chopped a pinch of sugar

juice of 1 lime small handful of coriander, roughly chopped **TO FINISH** 4-6 tbsp soured cream (optional) small handful of coriander, roughly chopped

- Heat the oil in a saucepan over a medium-low heat. Add most of the onion (reserving a little to finish the soup) and sauté for about 5 minutes or until softened. Add the garlic, chillies and cumin and stir for 1 minute.
- 2 Add the stock, roasted tomato sauce or passata, tomatoes, beans, oregano and sugar. Season with sea salt and freshly ground black pepper, bring to the boil and simmer gently for 10 minutes. Remove from the heat and add the lime juice and coriander. Taste and adjust the seasoning if necessary.
- 쥥 Serve the soup topped with dollops of soured cream, if you like, and scattered with the reserved red onion, chopped coriander and more black pepper.

FOOD & DRINK



ROASTED TOMATO SAUCE

Heat the oven to 180°C (160°C fan oven) gas mark 4. Lay 1.5kg-2kg ripe tomatoes (larger ones halved and cut-side up) on a baking tray. Scatter over 3 finely chopped garlic cloves and a few sprigs of thyme and marjoram, and trickle over 2 tbsp rapeseed or olive oil. Season with plenty of sea salt and freshly ground black pepper. Put the tray in the oven for about an hour, maybe a bit longer, until the tomatoes are completely soft and pulpy, and starting to crinkle and caramelise on top. Set the tomatoes aside to cool off for half an hour or so. Then tip them into a large sieve and rub through with a wooden spoon, or use a traditional mouli. Discard the skin and pips. Your tomato sauce is now ready to use. This recipe makes about 500ml.

STUFFED PEPPERS WITH NEW POTATOES, FETA AND PESTO

Preparation 25 minutes Cooking about an hour Serves 4 This is a lovely, simple way to enjoy the smoky taste of roasted peppers without the bother of peeling them. The potatoes, meanwhile, make this a pleasingly substantial dish. You could use a good shop-bought pesto but a homemade one will be better.

200g small new potatoes 4 red peppers 1 tbsp olive oil 200g feta cheese 4 tbsp pesto (see below) a small handful of basil leaves, shredded, to finish (optional) FOR THE PESTO 50g pine nuts or walnuts, lightly toasted large bunch of basil (about 30g), leaves only large bunch of parsley (about 30g), leaves only a few mint leaves (optional) 1 garlic clove, chopped 50g Parmesan, hard goat's cheese or other wellflavoured hard cheese, grated finely grated zest of 1/2 lemon 100ml-150ml extra-virgin olive oil good squeeze of lemon juice

1 First make the pesto:
put the nuts into a food
processor along with the
herbs, garlic, grated cheese
and lemon zest. Blitz to a
paste, then, with the motor
running, slowly pour in
the extra-virgin olive oil
until you have a thick,

- sloppy purée. Scrape the pesto into a bowl and season with salt, freshly ground black pepper and a good squeeze of lemon juice. This will keep in the fridge for a few days.
- 2 Heat the oven to 200°C (180°C fan oven) gas mark 6. Bring a pan of salted water to the boil, add the new potatoes and boil for 8-12 minutes, until just tender. Drain and cool slightly.
- Halve the peppers lengthways and remove the seeds and pith. Brush the outsides with olive oil, then place on a baking tray lined with baking parchment. Halve or quarter the new potatoes and place in a bowl. Cut the feta into 1cm cubes and add to the potatoes. Toss both with the pesto until well combined.
- 4 Spoon the filling into the halved peppers and bake for 40-45 minutes until they are browned on the top. If using shredded basil, scatter it over before serving.





GRILLED AUBERGINES WITH CHILLI AND HONEY

Preparation 10 minutes, plus resting Cooking 20 minutes Serves 4

Well-oiled aubergine slices – grilled until soft and yielding – make a velvety sponge for honey, lemon, chilli and thyme. Other herbs would work well here, too – try parsley, basil, mint or coriander.

3 medium aubergines (about 750g), trimmed olive oil, for brushing 1 red chilli, deseeded and finely chopped a few sprigs of thyme, leaves only a little clear honey, to trickle a little lemon juice

1 Heat the grill to mediumhigh. Slice the skin off the aubergines, then cut across into Icm slices. Place on a foil-lined grill tray. Brush liberally with oil and sprinkle with sea salt and freshly ground black pepper. Grill until golden brown on one side, then flip the slices over, brush with more oil and season again. Keep grilling until the slices are a deep golden brown all over and very tender, flipping them again

if you need to. This will take around 15-20 minutes.

Transfer the grilled aubergine slices to a plate or dish, layering them if you need to and sprinkling each layer with chopped chilli and thyme leaves. Trickle over a little honey and lemon juice. Leave for at least 10 minutes until tepid or, even better, 30 minutes until cool, by which time the juices will have run and mingled a little. Add more salt and pepper if you think it necessary, then serve as a starter, with bread, or as part of a mezze spread.



SQUASH AND WALNUT TOASTIES

Preparation 10 minutes
Cooking 10 minutes Serves 2
If you're roasting squash or
pumpkin, do a little extra and
have this for lunch the day after.
You can use other roasted veg,
too, such as celeriac, beetroot
or carrots, and different nuts.

a handful of walnuts

1 tbsp rapeseed or olive oil
a knob of butter

200g-250g roasted squash
or pumpkin
a couple of sprigs of thyme,
leaves only (optional)

50g blue cheese (or Cheddar
or goat's cheese), crumbled
2 thick slices of sourdough
or other robust bread
a trickle of clear honey

- Heat a non-stick frying pan over a medium heat. Add the walnuts and toast gently for a few minutes until they take on a little colour. Tip out of the pan and set aside.
- 2 Return the pan to the heat and add the oil and butter. When foaming, add the squash and cook for 3-4 minutes, until heated through. Stir in the thyme, if using, then take off the heat. Add the nuts and the cheese, and stir into the squash. Add sea salt and freshly ground black pepper if you think it needs it.
- Heat the grill to medium and lightly toast the bread. Pile the squash mixture onto each slice, packing it down a little and making sure some chunks of cheese are on top. Trickle over a little honey and grill until golden. Serve straightaway.

120 **№** SEPTEMBER 2017

TOURTE DE BLETTES

Preparation 35 minutes, plus soaking and chilling Cooking 35 minutes Serves 8

Based on a traditional niçoise recipe, this sweet pie makes a lovely dessert, and it's a great way to use Swiss chard. Keep the stems for another dish, such as a gratin of chard stalks.

FOR THE SWEET PASTRY 300g plain flour 50g icing sugar 175g chilled unsalted butter, cut into cubes 1 large egg yolk 75ml cold milk (or water) a little milk or beaten egg, for brushing FOR THE FILLING 50g raisins 3 tbsp cider brandy leaves from 1kg Swiss chard 2 large eggs, lightly beaten 50g pine nuts, lightly toasted finely grated zest of 1 lemon 35g caster sugar 2 dessert apples (about 250g) icing sugar, to dust

- Ombine the raisins and brandy in a small bowl and leave to soak for a few hours.
- 2 For the pastry, put the flour, icing sugar and a pinch of fine sea salt in a food processor and blitz briefly to combine (or sift into a bowl). Add the butter and blitz (or rub in with your fingertips) until the mixture resembles breadcrumbs. Add the egg yolk, and enough milk or water to bring the dough together in large clumps. Tip out onto a lightly floured surface and knead lightly into a ball. Wrap in clingfilm
- and chill for 30 minutes. **6** Heat the oven to 200°C (180°C fan oven) gas mark 6. Put the chard leaves into a saucepan with just the water that clings to them from washing. Cover the pan and cook over a medium-low heat until the leaves have wilted in their own steam - about 5 minutes. Tip into a colander and leave to drain. When cool enough to handle, squeeze out all the liquid from the leaves, then chop them.
- then chop them.

 1 Combine the chopped chard with the beaten eggs, pine nuts, lemon zest, sugar and raisins, plus their soaking liquid. Grate the apples, avoiding the core. With your hands, squeeze out as much liquid as you can from it, then stir this into the mixture, too.

- 6 On a floured surface, roll out two-thirds of the pastry fairly thinly and use to line a loose-bottomed 24cm flan tin. Trim the excess pastry from the edge. Spread the chard mixture in the case.
- 6 Brush a little milk or beaten egg around the rim of the pastry. Roll out the remainder to form the lid, place over the tart and press the edge down lightly to seal. Trim off the excess. Make a couple of slits in the pastry lid for steam to escape, then bake for 30 minutes or until golden brown on top. Leave to cool for a few minutes in the tin, then lift out the tart, keeping it on the tin base, and slide onto a wire rack. Dust the surface generously with icing sugar. Serve warm. 🌌



Using the best of seasonal flavours, these recipes transform delicious salads from simple side dishes into main meals to satisfy all appetites

RECIPES AND FOOD STYLING BY ALISON WALKER • PHOTOGRAPHS BY TARA FISHER • STYLING BY WEI TANG



*Preparation 15 minutes Cooking 25 minutes Serves 4-6*From the earthy beetroot and spicy leaves to the peppery tender beef and piquant dressing, this salad is full of punchy flavours. If you can, use different colours and varieties of beetroot to add visual interest.

3 tbsp mixed peppercorns, roughly crushed 1kg fillet of beef 1 tbsp rapeseed oil 300g young beetroot, peeled and trimmed 2 handfuls of watercress, rocket or beetroot leaves FOR THE DRESSING 2 tbsp extra-virgin olive oil 1 tbsp lemon juice ½ tsp Dijon mustard 1 tbsp capers, drained, rinsed and chopped 1 tbsp gherkins, finely chopped 1 shallot, finely chopped

- Heat the oven to 200°C (180°C fan oven) gas mark 6. Scatter the peppercorns onto a chopping board and roll the beef in them, pressing down so they stick to the meat.
- 2 Put a frying pan over a medium heat until hot. Add the oil, then brown the beef on all sides. Transfer to a small roasting pan and cook for 15-20 minutes for rare. To check it's cooked, insert a skewer into the centre of the meat for 10 seconds it should feel

- piping hot to the touch. Remove to a warm dish, loosely covered with foil, and leave to rest.
- Thinly slice the beetroot, using a mandolin if you have one.
- 4 Put all the dressing ingredients in a screwtop jar. Season with salt and freshly ground black pepper and shake to emulsify.
- Slice the beef and arrange down one side of a serving platter. Arrange the beetroot and salad leaves alongside. Spoon over a little of the dressing and serve the rest separately in a bowl. Take to the table and let everyone dig in.





BROAD BEAN, MINT AND FETA SALAD WITH MARINATED LAMB

Preparation 20 minutes, plus marinating Cooking about 15 minutes Serves 4
Try to use younger broad beans if you can as they are more tender – they often become mealier in texture as they grow larger.

1 tsp each coriander and fennel seeds 1 garlic clove, peeled 150g full-fat plain yogurt 1/2 tbsp olive oil 500g lamb leg or shoulder, fat trimmed and cut into chunks 300g broad beans (podded weight) 1 Little Gem lettuce, torn 6-8 radishes, thinly sliced a handful of mint leaves zest of 1 lemon, plus lemon wedges, for serving (optional) 100g feta, crumbled extra-virgin olive oil, for drizzling

1 Roughly grind the spices with the garlic and a large pinch of sea salt in a pestle and mortar. Mix together with the yogurt and oil in a non-metallic dish. Add the lamb and turn to coat in the mixture. Cover and chill overnight.

2 Blanch the broad beans in boiling water for 2-3 minutes. Drain and refresh under cold water. Pop out of their skins and set aside.

3 Thread the lamb onto skewers. Barbecue, griddle or grill for about 10-12 minutes, turning to cook evenly. Leave to rest for a few minutes while you assemble the salad.

4 Toss the broad beans with the lettuce, radishes, mint leaves and lemon zest. Pile onto a serving plate, scattered with the feta and a drizzle of olive oil, alongside the lamb skewers.





tailed and halved

softly boiled eggs, halved, to serve

FOR THE DRESSING until tender. Drain under 2 tbsp olive oil cold water and leave in a 1 tbsp white wine vinegar bowl of cold water until 1 small garlic clove, crushed a dab of Dijon mustard the salad.

- Heat the oven to 200°C (180°C fan oven) gas mark 6. Boil the potatoes in a pan of salted water for 7 minutes. Drain and leave for a few minutes for them to dry out.
- 2 While the potatoes are cooking, put the olive oil and rosemary in a roasting pan and place in the oven to heat up.
- you're ready to assemble 6 Heat a griddle pan until hot. Brush the tuna with oil and cook for 1-2 minutes for medium rare (depending

on the thickness of the

steaks). Leave to rest for a

couple of minutes, before slicing thickly. 6 Put all the dressing ingredients, along with salt and freshly ground black pepper, into a screw-top jar



CITRUS CHICKEN WITH ROASTED FENNEL AND BARLEY COUSCOUS

Preparation 20 minutes, plus marinating and standing Cooking 35 minutes Serves 6

Barley couscous is a nuttier, more flavoursome version of the durum wheat version and soaks up the citrus juices beautifully.

3 skinless chicken breasts zest and juice of 1 lemon 1 tsp dried marjoram or oregano 2 tbsp olive oil 2 large fennel bulbs 160g barley couscous 175ml hot chicken or vegetable stock, to cover 1 tbsp extra-virgin olive oil juice and zest of 1 small orange, plus 2 oranges, peeled and segmented 4 spring onions, finely chopped handful of fresh marjoram or oregano, roughly chopped

1 Put the chicken breasts in a sealable plastic bag with the lemon zest and juice,

dried herbs and 1 tbsp olive oil. Leave in the fridge overnight, massaging occasionally, to marinate.

2 Heat the oven to 190°C (170°C fan oven) gas mark 5. Halve the fennel bulbs, removing the outer layers if they are blemished. (Keep fronds for adding to the salad later.) Slice the fennel in half top to bottom, then each piece into four. Put in a roasting pan; drizzle with the rest of the oil. Season with salt and freshly ground black pepper. Roast for 20-25 minutes until golden and tender. Leave to cool.

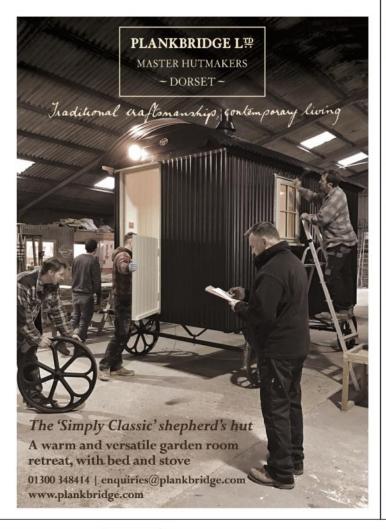
3 Put the couscous into a

bowl and add the stock. Cover the bowl with clingfilm and leave to stand for 5 minutes. Fluff up the grains with a fork and stir in the extra-virgin olive oil, orange juice and zest, orange segments, spring onion, cooled fennel and any fennel fronds, finely chopped. Set aside.

Heat a griddle pan over a medium heat. Put the chicken on a board and cover with clingfilm. Flatten lightly with a rolling pin to an even thickness. Griddle for 5 minutes each side until cooked through. Leave to rest for 5 minutes, then slice thickly.

5 Stir the chicken and herbs into the couscous just before serving.







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To keep hold of a healthy summer glow without reaching for the fake tan, try one of these new products. Each has complexionenhancing benefits, while adding a hint of colour. Spritz Anne Sémonin Glow Instant Radiance Essence (£49, annesemonin.com) onto a cotton pad and smooth over face and neck for a natural glow. The antioxidant-rich formula also helps fight the signs of ageing. BareMinerals Complexion Rescue Tinted Hydrating Gel Cream (£27, bareminerals.co.uk) contains olive and coconut extracts for super-nourished skin. For an on-the-go glow, dab on Estée Lauder Double Wear Radiant Bronze Cushion Stick (£28, esteelauder.co.uk) to create a sun-kissed look. Fruit extracts give the skin extra radiance. Inglot Beautifier Tinted Cream (£16, inglotuk.com) has illuminating particles for a dewy effect, and is enriched with saffron and Coenzyme Q10 for hydration.

Boost your wellbeing the natural way with our round-up from the world of health and beauty

ENJOY INDIAN SUMMER STROLLS with the Ecco Cool 2.0 sneaker (£150, ecco.com). A series of tubes in the midsole helps to keep feet cool, and a Gore-Tex waterproof upper allows air to circulate. THE PERFECT PROTEIN-PACKED SNACK TO PUT IN YOUR POCKET on walks is Boostball (£1.79, boostball.com). Made with raw, natural ingredients, each one is a balance of protein, healthy fats and carbohydrate for an energy hit, and delicious flavours include Raw Chocolate Brownie and Maple & Cinnamon Roll.

WITH NUTRITIONAL ADVICE AND SPECIALLY DESIGNED RECIPES, The Midlife Kitchen (Mitchell Beazley, £25) is designed for women in their forties, fifties and beyond. There's no faddy dieting, just tasty meals signposted for aiding hormones, skin, memory, digestion and energy. For more tips and products, visit netdoctor.co.uk.

NATURE'S MEDICINE CABINET

Squash Rich in carotenes (which give them their lovely colour), squash and pumpkins are a good source of antioxidants that are linked to a reduction in the risk of certain cancers. They are also full of betacarotene, which is converted into eyehealthy vitamin A. Winter squash such as 'Hokkaido' and 'Crown Prince' have far more carotenes per gram than butternut squash. Roast in thick slices - eat the skin, too, as this is where the greatest concentration of antioxidants is. And don't forget the seeds they contain plant sterols, which can help reduce bad cholesterol.*



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e've all heard how probiotics can help to boost immunity, improve digestion and even affect mood, but now experts are beginning to explore the role these 'good' bacteria play in healthy skin, too. Some studies have linked imbalances in the gut with conditions such as acne, eczema and psoriasis. Although upping your intake of bacteria-rich fermented foods like kefir and kombucha may help your skin from within, there's increasing interest in the role bacteria can play on the outside, too.

Like the gut, skin is home to lots of bacteria – both good and bad. "They form a layer, which is our first line of defence against disease, inflammation and infection. So in order to encourage healthy skin and minimise infections, acne, redness and eczema, maintaining the health of our precious good skin microbes is vital," explains Georgie Cleeve, founder of natural skincare company Oskia (oskiaskincare.com).

SKIN PROTECTION

Pollution, stress, sunlight and even the cleanser, shower gel and make-up you use can all damage the balance of skin flora, leaving it open to irritation or infection. "Many cosmetics and personal care products are made using harsh

The latest skincare products draw on the power of good bacteria to create a healthy, glowing complexion

WORDS BY KATE LANGRISH

SEPTEMBER 2017 **№** 131

HEALTH & BEAUTY

preservatives, which can alter or destroy the skin's microflora," Georgie warns. "Washing too much or too harshly can remove the protective acid mantle of the skin, and products such as AHAs and chemical exfoliants change the skin's pH ratio, which also affects the microbial balance."

This is where probiotics come in. Scientific research has shown that applying certain strains of probiotics directly to skin can be beneficial in treating conditions such as acne, very dry or reactive skin. However, using live bacteria in off-the-shelf skincare products would make them unstable, so the latest formulations harness the benefits by using fragments of probiotic bacteria, or 'lysates'. It's thought that

applying these can stimulate the production of defence cells that restore skin's natural balance. Alternatively, prebiotics are incorporated. "These work by providing a favourable environment where good bacteria can thrive over bad bacteria. They also act as an anti-inflammatory, so are wonderful for sensitive conditions such as eczema," Georgie says.

These latest products are also very gentle and free from ingredients that damage or strip away skin-boosting microbes. "Glowing skin is all about balance and many challenging skin concerns result when this is not achieved. To maintain equilibrium, we need to avoid using harsh chemicals to ensure the natural acid mantle remains

intact and irritants can't penetrate the skin," explains Claire Vero, founder of probiotic skincare company Aurelia (aureliaskincare.com).

BENEFITS FOR ALL

As well as specific skin conditions, Claire's research found that probiotic ingredients may help with the more everyday concerns of ageing or dullness. "Aurelia's probiotic milk peptide works with other probiotic ingredients to help stimulate cells that produce collagen (responsible for skin elasticity), hyaluronic acid (responsible for hydration) and fibronectin (responsible for skin support)," she explains. "These components give skin its youthful



Probiotic ingredients may also help with everyday skin ageing or dullness



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and supple appearance and their deterioration leads to sagging and wrinkles."

So whether you want to help ease sensitive and reactive skin, tackle acne or eczema, or give a tired complexion a new-found glow, take your pick from this selection of probiotic- and prebiotic-powered skincare essentials...

INSTANT RADIANCE A brightening treatment that removes dead skin cells without damaging the microbial balance, Oskia Renaissance Mask (£49.50, oskiaskincare.com) also feeds good bacteria with prebiotics from chicory root for a healthy complexion. COMBAT REDNESS Help camouflage blotchiness in the skin and ease it at the same time with Clinique Redness Solutions Makeup (£27, clinique.co.uk) with probiotic ingredients.

GENTLE CLEANSING With a lovely foaming formula, Tula Purifying Face Cleanser (£20, qvcuk.com) removes impurities without stripping skin of its natural protection. Bifida ferment further helps to maintain the balance.

ANTI-AGEING Aurelia Cell Revitalise Day Moisturiser (£52, aureliaskincare, com) uses probiotic ingredients and milk peptides alongside natural oils to help prevent ageing and improve smoothness.

DAILY PROTECTION Vichy Slow Âge Fluid Moisturiser (£30, boots.com) contains the probiotic-derived bifidus to help strengthen the skin's natural

defence against internal and external stresses that can accelerate ageing.

COMBINATION SKIN ESPA

Optimal Skin ProMoisturiser (£46, espaskincare.com) uses prebiotics and yeast bioferment to help balance skin.

DRY COMPLEXIONS Deeply hydrating but extremely gentle, Chantecaille Vital Essence (£86, spacenk.com) contains Bifida ferment to kickstart skin repair.

STRESSED OR SENSITIVE Glowbiotics Probiotic Instant Refreshing Gel Hydrator (£55, harveynichols.com) is packed with probiotics and calming botanicals to soothe sensitive or

BLEMISH PRONE Medik8 betaMoisturise Skin Balancing Mattifying Moisturiser (£38, medik8.com) contains Alpha Glucan-Oligosaccharide prebiotics derived from sugar beets, which stimulate the growth of 'good' skin bacteria and help to reduce levels of acne-causing bacteria. ON-THE-GO Spritz on de Mamiel Dewy Facial Mist (£47, demamiel.com) throughout the day - both under and over make-up. Prebiotics from cold-pressed vegetable jicama work to encourage a good balance of skin flora, while plant peptides help to boost skin elasticity and brighten the complexion.











irritated complexions.











next month in COUNTRY LIVING

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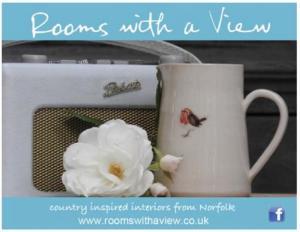
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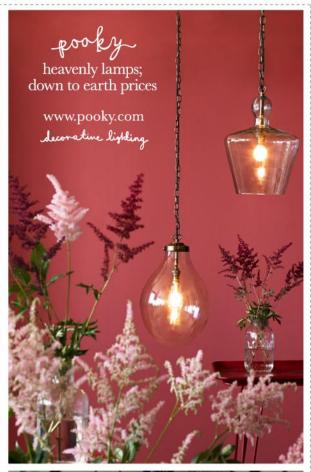


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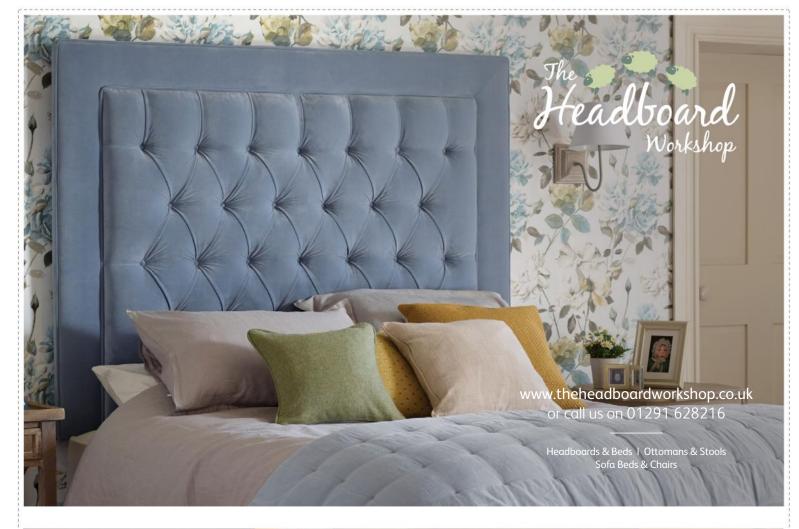
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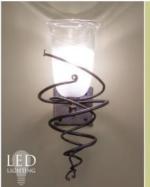
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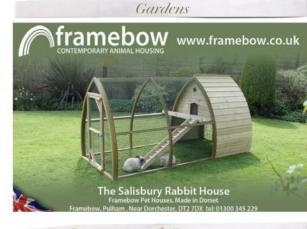
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When not working in the capital, Margaret relaxes in Suffolk, spending time on the coast in Shingle Street (left) and tending her garden, which she fills with wild flowers such as fennel (below)

MY COUNTRYSIDE MARGARET HOWELL

The fashion designer talks about unique architecture and wild swimming in Suffolk

When my children were young, I liked taking holidays in Britain.

We kept going back to a village on the Deben Peninsula in Suffolk, and rented an old cottage, which was lovely but quite restrictive – the low ceilings meant I hit the lampshade every time I changed the bed.

Some years ago I bought my own 1960s house in Suffolk and I've furnished it with finds from charity shops and jumble sales. I am very interested in modernist design. I have a shop on Wigmore Street in London where I display and sell furniture and homeware. I want to use it to promote unsung British designers and draw people's attention to all the lovely things that often get thrown out – Poole Pottery, for example, Anglepoise lamps or David Mellor cutlery.

My house was designed by the Swiss

architect Rudy Mock. It's in a terrace

of six properties, which were originally

built as holiday homes. The villagers

used to refer to them as rabbit hutches because they have flat roofs and are clad in wood. It's open-plan downstairs and there's a wall of glass looking out onto the garden, which is wide and flat.

In my garden I love to grow grasses

The heavy sea mists in

East Anglia are quite magical

and cow parsley, and wild flowers such as cowslips and snowdrops. There's lots of fennel, too. It's quite fun taming what seeds there naturally.

I love the outdoors there's always something fresh and beautiful to see. There are vast open skies in

East Anglia and a wonderful light that is constantly

changing. In autumn we have heavy sea mists, which can be quite magical. The ideas for my designs come from many sources, but I think the time I spend at home refreshes me and opens my mind. My clothes suit the environment and the climate. I never really need to dress

up for work in London, so I might wear a T-shirt and jeans, but Suffolk is where I keep my slightly older clothes. When I'm there, my cashmere sweaters will sometimes have a hole in them, and I'll wear a few more layers. It's important to me that the clothes I design are meant to be worn in the real world.

I like the change of lifestyle when I return to East Anglia - collecting wood, lighting open fires, going for walks. There's the smell of the freshly ploughed earth, and I enjoy cycling down the lanes to the sea. I swim all year round - in a heated pool in winter - but I love going in the sea when I can. Along the beach near my home, there is a lovely house in a hamlet called Shingle Street built by the little-known British architect John Penn. He only built nine properties, all in this area in the 1960s. They are flat, modern and minimal, quite extraordinary for this part of the world, which is so cottagey and conventional. But they seem really suited to the landscape and have extraordinary outlooks. I thought how wonderful it would be to live in a house like that, so one day I knocked on the door. The couple have been my friends ever since. There is an emptiness about the

Suffolk coast, and it can be very harsh, particularly in winter. The war defences on the shore and the worn groynes have a brutalist, sculptural quality. It's not conventionally pretty, but to me it's beautiful.

John Penn's Beach House is open to view on

9 September; visitors can see Nine Villas in Suffolk, an exhibition compiled by Margaret Howell. For details, email annelouisepage@gmail.com. Margaret Howell supports Open House, the charity that promotes access to notable buildings in the UK.

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EVEN JUST A SMALL CHANGE CAN HELP

to freshen up a decorating scheme and bring new visual interest to a room. To inspire you, we have created this special supplement packed with simple but stylish ideas for kitchens and bathrooms that will transform these vital spaces. On the following pages you will find a wealth of clever and creative projects from painted floorboards and statement walls to mixing together the contemporary and the traditional to striking effect in a kitchen. All of the ideas capture the CL look perfectly. Happy decorating!

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STYLISH **KITCHENS**

Discover simple ways to introduce a rustic touch to the heart of the home





- Restore an original terracotta tiled floor to its former glory to add character. For best results, scrub the tiles clean and brush with boiled linseed oil to improve waterproofness and create a lovely natural sheen. Alternatively, to protect from dirt, use a water-based sealant specially designed for terracotta and stone.
- Give your kitchen a dash of retro chic with pretty accessories that have an old-fashioned aesthetic. Source cake tins, weighing scales, toasters, kettles and fridges with a 1950s look in pastel sugared-almond colours.







5 If your home has original shutters, refresh them with a fresh coat of paint or sand back to reveal the natural wood grain. Alternatively, commission a carpenter to make some to fit, and opt for classic Shaker panel styles that are attractive yet unobtrusive.



A simple hanging rail and set of butcher's hooks will ensure everyday cooking accessories are close to hand. Opt for modern stainless steel or, for a dash of utilitarian chic, look out for brass, bronze or colour-coated designs.

Reuse and recycle industrial favourites such as corrugated iron, steel, timber and weathered-wood cladding to create a rustic cabin look in a kitchen. Strong and robust, these are materials that are hugely practical and visually pleasing, too, with a rich patina of texture and colour, so they are great for use as cupboard façades or worktops.





S Café-style curtains are a perfect solution for providing a degree of privacy without blocking out too much daylight. Use lengths of lace fabric or pretty voile that will diffuse the light, hung from suspension wire and hooks at the horizontal halfway point on the window.



Simple baskets, jars or boxes in different sizes are ideal for a tiny windowsill, and make great storage for all sorts of kitchen items from wooden spoons and cooking utensils to string and other household essentials. Natural textures in earthy shades will add a touch of rustic style.



Mix and match different furniture styles to add character and originality. Classic ladderback chairs look good teamed with vintage metal stools or benches. For compact rooms, source small stools that tuck away or stack, and choose tables with leaves that can be folded down when not in use.





Windows that are redundant as a result of an extension or internal modifications, or even quirky nooks in old properties, can be transformed into characterful cupboard spaces for kitchen jars and crockery with simple inset shelving (right). Add subtle panelled doors to keep contents clean and dust free.



14 Kitchens work best when there is plenty of storage and worktop space for preparing food. For a clever solution that combines both and can be easily moved around to suit your needs, invest in a butcher's block unit on castors with handy room below for shelves or rustic baskets.





15 A stunning scullery-style pantry introduces utility chic. A stand-alone cupboard or a sectioned-off alcove fitted with doors can be given a whole new look with basic white tiles, grey grouting, cast-iron shelving brackets and some classic glass preserving jars for storing dry goods and other lardercupboard staples.



Floating shelves, fixed with concealed brackets, that mirror the style of the worktop below present a simple storage option in a kitchen.
These oak Buckland shelves from Neptune (right) will create a modern rustic touch



Source slimline storage solutions that will hold a variety of kitchen bits and pieces, and look great, too. Wall-mounted cubbyholestyle units are ideal for any empty wall space. Look out for ones that combine storage with hooks, which can be used for hanging kitchen linens or a set of mugs.





Bring instant style to old cupboards with a coat of paint and a gingham curtain. It's easy to achieve and costeffective. Sand back existing paintwork, apply two coats of eggshell and leave to dry before attaching fabric to the insides of the cupboard doors. Combine cream with red for a cheery Scandi country look.



21 Vintage accessories can be both practical and decorative. Enamelware is particularly popular, so it's worth scouring flea markets and antiques fairs for good examples. Any cracks or chips will just add to the overall aged effect.



Transform a corner of a kitchen into a dining area with a simple painted statement wall in a chequerboard effect that is reminiscent of antique tiles. Mark out the areas with masking tape before applying the paint and accessorise with some homespun checked and striped kitchen linens



22 To create a fresh feel in a small space, restrict your colours to two or three from the same palette. Tonal variations of cool, watery shades such as aqua and coastal blue work well together and are ideal for introducing some retro charm. Source vintage enamelware and polka-dot prints to complete the look.

and decorative pieces.





24 Use wall lights in corners where extra illumination may be needed. It's best to factor these in at renovation stage where the wiring can be neatly concealed behind fresh plaster, or use clip lights to create the same effect - these can be easily attached to existing shelving. Decorative shades in metal or glass will add character and charm.

25 Vintage and antique pieces of furniture are often smaller in size than modern counterparts and can be useful in a country kitchen. Update the interior of an old cupboard by lining shelves with offcuts of wallpaper or doilies and finishing the edges with a lace trim.





BEAUTIFUL BATHROOMS

A clever mix of simple but creative ideas will transform this often-overlooked space





Sufficient illumination in a bathroom is key, so consider a combination of overhead ceiling spotlights with wall-mounted task lights. Look out for styles that are adjustable and position them strategically above or either side of a mirror or vanity unit that is used for applying make-up or for shaving.

28 Accessories in traditional bouldoir styles are best for adding a delicate touch to a period bathroom. Look out for items such as soap dishes, toilet-roll holders and towel rails in enamel or porcelain, or source an array of antiqueinspired new versions from bathroom suppliers.







Trench-style glass bonbon jars and bottles make wonderful containers for soaps, cotton buds, bath salts and bathing accessories. Look out for other interesting alternatives such as vintage apothecary vessels or glass jam jars that can be topped with a fabric cover.

Pretty florals create a romantic feel in a bathroom, and tiny sprig and rosebud designs work well in a small plain space. As an alternative to fabric or wallpaper, use floor tiles to introduce pattern. Vinyl is a practical option, being easy to lay and keep clean.





34 Ideal for providing a certain amount of privacy, understated café-style shutters suit a period bathroom. Before fitting, ensure you have sufficient wall space for them to fold back neatly out of the way.



Mix and match simple storage solutions in natural materials for a contemporary country feel. Introduce subtle textures and lines with rustic woven baskets in a range of sizes for linens, and wooden pegrails for hanging towels, mitts and brushes. A small stool works well as a place to keep lotions and soaps close to hand.







577 For a tall, clean-lined Shaker-style unit, consider a larder cupboard originally used in the kitchen. Its storage capacity will be perfect for towels and linens, as well as smaller lotions and bottles.

Floor coverings made from natural fibres, such as coir or sisal, look great in old country bathrooms where the texture adds warmth and echoes the simple rustic qualities of wood panelling and exposed beams. Layer rugs for maximum insulation against draughty floorboards and introduce colour and pattern with a striped runner as a bath-mat alternative.



38 Lighting for bathrooms needs to meet strict safety standards to ensure it is suitable for high-moisture areas. Authentic maritime styles had to be robust enough to survive the elements. so ship's-well lamps and deck-light pendants are ideal.



40 A frieze of tiles laid up to dado height is hardworking and practical, and a great way of introducing decoration to a bathroom. Here (below), Italian-style tiles by Fired Earth create a stylish setting to its Aphrodite sink.



41 A collection of similar styles of pictures, prints or mirrors will bring interest to a bathroom wall. A distinctive display of vintage mirrors in different shapes increases the sense of space in a small room. Source from antiques fairs and flea markets.





42 A made-to-measure ruffled curtain is practical and pretty. In a compact bathroom, opt for a simple fabric version that sits neatly on the windowsill. Delicate patterns, such as dainty floral prints and toile de Jouy designs, are ideal. Alternatively, use antique linen or cotton with intricate embroidery detail.





45 Add an element of sophistication to a country bathroom with a floral wallpaper. Paste away from high-moisture areas such as the shower. Balance the print with plain painted panelling and use creamy tones for warmth and vibrancy in rooms without much natural light.



46 Maximise the potential of every part of a tiny bathroom. Simple hooks attached to the back of a door are the perfect solution for hanging towels, robes or even smaller items in drawstring bags. For a rustic feel, source Shakerstyle heart designs in forged iron to match existing architectural ironmongery such as doorknobs or handles.





47 Make a practical and decorative shelving unit for a bathroom from an ornate vintage frame and a sheet of moisture-resistant MDF. Choose one with intricate detailing and commission a carpenter to create a box structure with inset shelves to fit. Paint in an off-white shade and sand lightly to reveal and highlight some of the carved elements.



48 Original shutters work well as cupboard doors and can be found in reclamation yards and flea markets or online. Trim to fit and paint in pale shades, using a pastel colour on the inside to contrast.



49 A fabric curtain is a great way to conceal plumbing under a sink and to introduce pattern and eye-catching detail. Use a gathered length offloral, stripe or spotted fabric and attach it with hooks and wire.



Create a romantic look in a period bathroom with floral patterns that have a cottage-garden feel. Framed oil paintings, vintage teacups and pretty ceramics make a charming display. Decorative floral bowls also double as attractive storage for soaps and sponges.

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LASSCO lassco.co.uk
LITTLE GREENE 0845 880 5855;
littlegreene.com PAINT BY
CONRAN paintbyconran.com

THE STENCIL LIBRARY 01661 844844; stencil-library.co.uk

FIOORING

ALTERNATIVE FLOORING 01264
335111; alternativeflooring.com
THE BAKED TILE COMPANY
02920 358409; bakedtiles.co.uk
BERT AND MAY 0203 744 0776;
bertandmay.com CRUCIAL
TRADING 01562 743747;
crucial-trading.com HARVEY MARIA
0845 680 1231; harveymaria.com
KERSAINT COBB 01675 430430;
kersaintcobb.co.uk ROGER OATES
DESIGN 020 7351 2288; rogeroates.
com THE WINCHESTER TILE CO
01392 473004; winchestertiles.com

FURNITURE

ASTONMATTHEWS 020 7226 7220; astonmatthews.co.uk BATHSTORE 0330 0535 661; bathstore.com
BRITISH STANDARD
CUPBOARDS 020 7870 7688; britishstandardcupboards.co.uk

CATCHPOLE AND RYE 020 7351
0940; catchpoleandrye.com DEVOL
01509 261 000; devolkitchens.co.uk
JOHN LEWIS OF HUNGERFORD
0700 278 4726; john-lewis.co.uk
NEPTUNE 01793 427427; neptune.com
PLAIN ENGLISH KITCHENS 020 7486
2674; plainenglishdesign.co.uk

LIGHTING

ALEXANDER AND PEARL 020
8508 0411; alexanderandpearl.co.uk
DYKE AND DEAN 01424 429202;
dykeanddean.com FARTHING 0844
567 2400; thefarthing.co.uk FRITZ
FRYER 01989 567416; fritzfryer.co.uk
JOHN CULLEN 020 7371 9000;
johncullenlighting.com ORIGINAL
BTC 020 7351 2130; originalbtc.com
SKINFLINT DESIGN 01326 565227;
skinflintdesign.co.uk

STORAGE

BAILEYS 01989 561 931; baileys home.com COX AND COX 0330 333 2123; coxandcox co.uk DESIGN VINTAGE 01243 573852; designvintage.co.uk THE DORMY HOUSE 01264 365808; thedormy house.com GARDEN TRADING 01993 845559; gardentrading.co.uk LOAF 0845 468 0527; loaf.com SCUMBLE GOOSIE 01453 731 305; scumblegoosie.co.uk

WINDOW TREATMENTS

HILLARYS 0800 916 6524;
hillarys.co.uk IAN MANKIN 020
7722 0997; ianmankin.co.uk
JANE CHURCHILL 020 7244 7427;
janechurchill.com NATURAL
CURTAIN COMPANY 01394 775670;
naturalcurtaincompany.co.uk
SANDERSON 0844 543 9500;
sanderson-uk.com SHUTTERLY
FABULOUS 0800 970 0800;
shutterlyfabulous.com THE
SHUTTER STORE 0800 074
7321; shutters.co.uk VANESSA
ARBUTHNOTT 01285 831437;
vanessaarbuthnott co.uk





